To my friend Douglas,

In appreciation for his ministry and for being a fellowhelper of the truth through the association.

Hoyle J. Allred
10/21/74

Phil. 1:9-11.

# HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

# HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

BY

GEORGE WASHINGTON PASCHAL

VOLUME I
1663—1805

RALEIGH
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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

TO

JOHN THOMAS ALDERMAN

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICES TO THE STATE AS EDUCATOR AND STATESMAN AND TO THE BAPTISTS OF NORTH CAROLINA AS A WRITER WHO HAS MADE MANY SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR HISTORY AND UNDER WHOSE PLAN AND ENCOURAGEMENT THIS WORK HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN

# PREFACE

In 1926 the Historical Commission of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention authorized the preparation and publication of a comprehensive history of the Baptists of North Carolina. The Commission advised that the first volume of the work should be published in 1930, the centennial anniversary of the founding of the Convention.

The need of such a work based on original studies of the sources has long been felt not only by the Baptists but by other students of the history of our State. As early as 1896, that discriminating and able historical writer, Dr. Thomas M. Pittman, in a series of articles in the *Biblical Recorder*, outlined what he conceived should be the nature and scope of such a history. Though I did not see Dr. Pittman's articles until I had written the greater part of my work, I was glad to see that in some important respects I had conformed, however imperfectly, to the conceptions of so able a scholar. Dr. Pittman insisted that a Baptist history should take account of both Baptist people and Baptist churches; that this history should be written only by a Baptist who could appreciate Baptist ideas and sentiments; that while it should correctly and fully set forth the religious life and work, the progress and doctrinal growth of the Baptists, it should also show to what extent Baptist principles and Baptist people helped to bring out of the discordant elements of our early population our peculiar North Carolina type of government and civilization; that this history should show how the Baptists have influenced people of other denominations in North Carolina and have been influenced by them; that in its writing account should be taken of the bearing of State history and related general history upon our denominational history; that the history of the Baptists of our State cannot be disassociated from the general history of the denomination; that this history should be based as far as possible on primary sources.

With conceptions such as these I went about the preparation of the present work. In this way I was led to begin with a brief account of the Baptists in England and America before their rise in North Carolina, and to include an outline of the political and social history of our colonial period and rather extended accounts of other denominations in colonial North Carolina, especially the Quakers, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. If in some instances I have failed to show how the conditions I describe have modified the life and development of our Baptist churches and people, I hope the intelligent reader may be able to make the proper deductions.

So far as possible I have gone to original sources. Most valuable of all has been a manuscript copy of Morgan Edwards's *Materials Towards a History of North Carolina Baptists,* which no historian since Benedict has used first hand. In the footnotes will be found indications of my other sources and authorities.

In a dedication I have acknowledged my indebtedness to Mr. J. T. Alderman. I wish here to call attention to my debt and that of the Baptists of the State to Dr. Charles E. Maddry, Corresponding Secretary of the Baptist State Convention. It has been largely his interest and support that have made possible this publication. Dr. W. L. Poteat has given valuable assistance in reading the proof, but must not be held responsible for such errors as will be found in my pages.

I have prepared this work for the most part while at the same time doing full work, both in the regular session and in the summer school, as a teacher in Wake Forest College. This will account partly for certain inequalities that may be found in it. I have tried in all instances to get the truth and tell it. At times I may seem to have been swept along by an enthusiasm which a contemplation of the deeds of our Baptist fathers always begets in me, and which I hope it will beget in those who read these pages.

G. W. PASCHAL

Wake Forest, North Carolina
September 30, 1930

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## I

## FOREWORD

I am undertaking to write the history of the Baptists of North Carolina from the first permanent settlement by the English to the present day. I shall tell of the various steps by which from obscure and small beginnings the Baptists had gained a position of influence and power even before the close of colonial days and are now become the most numerous denomination of Christians in the State. As a necessary introduction I shall trace the life of the colonists from the time the charter for the province of Carolina was granted to the Lords Proprietors in the year 1663, although the historical date of the establishment of the first Baptist church in the colony was 1727.

I shall tell whence the early settlers came and why they came, of their industrial, economic, social and political, as well as of their religious concerns, since I recognize that nothing that affects the life of men is foreign to the history of their religion. Especially was this true in a province like North Carolina where there was such close connection between matters of religion and civil liberty.

I shall trace in outline the work of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, who until the year 1701 were the only organized religious group in the colony, and the labors of the missionaries of the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, who, in 1701, with the encouragement of a Vestry Act by the provincial assembly, began their ministrations and continued them intermittently until the colonies declared their independence in 1776. The records of these denominations throw much light upon the religious condition of the colony and help us to an understanding of much that would otherwise be obscure in our Baptist history.

Believing that there were many of the Baptist persuasion among even the first settlers I shall give the reasons for that belief. I think I shall be able to give a satisfactory explanation of why the organization of a regular Baptist church was postponed until 1727. I shall recount the few but not uncertain notices we find of Baptists in the Province before that year and the circumstances that led to the establishment of the first churches of which we have historic accounts. I shall tell of the character of these Baptists and of the remarkable proselyting zeal that soon made them the most numerous body of Christians in eastern North Carolina; and of the speedy transformation of their churches to those of the Particular Baptist type. Likewise I shall tell of the rise of the Separate Baptists at Sandy Creek and of their rapid spread east, west, north and south, and even into Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. Nor shall I fail to give proper consideration to other independent Baptist beginnings in North Carolina, such as that of the colony of humble fishermen from Cape May which settled at Lockwood's Folly in Brunswick County, the church in Bladen County, and the early church in the Jersey settlement on the Yadkin. I shall also tell of the means by which the various groups of Baptists of different and discordant origins, the General Baptists, Particular Baptists and Separatists became united in one harmonious body.

And while considering the wonderful rapidity with which the Baptists spread in all sections of the Province I will undertake to tell how and to what extent their progress was limited by the lack of sufficient numbers of educated preachers, when they were evangelizing the people of all racial groups which had settled in our borders,—the English scattered all through the Province but most numerous in the east; the Scotch-Irish in the central portion and on the western frontier; the Irish in Duplin and Sampson; and the Highland Scotch in the "Sandhill" section. It will be of no small satisfaction to those who love the Baptist cause to learn of how in spite of the handicap of an uneducated ministry our Baptist forefathers brought the gospel to so many who were in religious destitution, and by their preaching instructed them in the cardinal Christian virtues of honesty, sobriety, charity, kindness, and love, and aspiration for the freedom of the sons of God in matters both religious and political. And I think we shall see that it was the simple democracy of the gospel as preached by the colonial Baptist preachers that did more than anything else to foster in our people that spirit of resistance to arbitrary exactions of the British Crown and the levies of taxes for the support of the Established Church, a resistance that had its culmination in the Regulator movement which seems to have had the moral support of the Baptists in all parts of the Province, and their very active support in the central portion. It will be my duty to show more clearly than has hitherto been done just what part the Baptists had in that movement. We shall see that it was not without reason that Governor Tryon named the Baptists among those whom he considered the originators of the movement, while he found the Baptist principles so inconsistent with the plans of the British Crown for the rule of the colonies and his own cherished purpose of making the Church of England dominant in North Carolina that he declared the Baptists the one sect beyond the pale of his toleration. I shall also tell of the part Baptists had in establishing Independence.

I shall next relate the history of the Baptists from the close of the Revolution to the organization of the Baptist State Convention in 1830, showing how new Associations were formed to meet the needs of the numerous churches which were established in the widely extended territory of North Carolina; how these Associations, while helpful in bringing their members into some kind of communion with one another, were each almost wholly uninfluenced by other groups of churches, their sole means of communication with others being the messengers exchanged with other Associations with whom they were in correspondence, and itinerant preachers, who, generally on their own initiative, traveled from church to church, and even to distant states, preaching and bringing tidings of the activities of other churches and Associations and of the work of the Lord among them; and how amid such conditions with no other guide than the New Testament these numerous and separate Associations and churches maintained a unity of faith and loyalty to the same fundamental Baptist principles and practices.

We shall also see how these churches and Associations freed themselves from several rites, such as feet-washing and laying on of hands, which were regarded as important obligatory practices in some of the colonial churches. On the other hand, we shall find that in the reaction from the exactions of the vestries the post-Revolution Baptists assumed an attitude of hostility towards an educated ministry and a proper support of preachers that had a baneful influence on the church which has not altogether faded out in the present day. Again, the isolation of the churches in the early days and the lack of communication tended to make them oblivious of the claims of other people than those of their own section. The religious world of many churches was no larger than the Association to which they belonged. There were few incentives to missionary activity. In addition the rigid Calvinism which was preached in many of the Baptist Churches of the post-Revolutionary days absorbed the entire religious interest and was powerful in modifying the evangelic appeal which the churches made to the unconverted. The yearly meeting with its austere sermons emphasizing the doctrine of election and the helplessness of sinners failed to bring into the fellowship of the churches even the sons and daughters of their own members, and taught penitents to wait for some special divine interposition which should compel them to come in. The result was that some churches grew weaker and weaker year after year and finally passed out of existence, while the new denomination of Methodists entered the field and gathered rich harvests of eager souls.

But there is another and more cheerful and inspiring story of the Baptists of pre-Convention days. Here and there in the gloom began to appear sparks of missionary interest. The breezes from the East which wafted the tidings of the work of Carey in India kindled a very flame of missionary zeal in the breast of Martin Ross in the Chowan region as early as 1803, when he came forward with his famous missionary resolution at the meeting of the Kehukee Association at Conoho in Martin County. Two years later Ross led in the organization of a missionary society, and in 1812 in the formation of a General Meeting of Correspondence which he designed should include all the North Carolina Associations. Soon there were signs of missionary interest in many sections of the State. Missionary societies, including some for the women of the churches, were organized by an agent of the Triennial Baptist Convention. There was a growing demand for the training of children in Sunday Schools, and for an educated ministry. The morning light was breaking. The full day was near at hand.

The story of these events will bring me to the close of what I design to be the first part of this history. If I can tell it in any adequate way it will give our Baptist brotherhood a new interest and pride in their denomination.

I shall now undertake to treat in more detail the matters mentioned above, but first I must give a brief account of Baptist history previous to that time both in the Old World and in the other American Colonies, for without this much in our own Baptist history would be unintelligible.

## II

# EARLY APPROXIMATIONS TO BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

The fundamental principle of the Baptists is the competency of the individual with God, without sacrament, priest or other mediator than Jesus Christ. As each one must be reconciled to God for himself the church is composed of regenerated members; by regeneration is meant the new birth which comes to one who repents and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. True salvation for any one is a matter of personal faith and is not bestowed by baptism or other rite or sacrament, nor does growth in the spiritual life depend primarily on sacraments, but comes about by the response the individual makes to the divine appeal as he finds it in the New Testament, by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in communion with his fellow Christians both in church services and in daily walk and conversation. With Baptists the local church is the unit of organization both for securing the blessings of the Gospel for its own members and for the evangelization of the world. Every local church is independent of any other church or ecclesiastical organization, but it may and in practice usually does join with other churches in Associations and Conventions the better to carry out its purposes. Admission to the church is by baptism after a confession of faith sufficient to show that the candidate has come into saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. In their practice and teaching of baptism is found what most distinguishes Baptists from other Christians. They differ in two respects: first, they do not baptize infants, because they do not believe that baptism is a sacrament bestowing either salvation or any other good upon infants or others, but that the infants of all peoples of the earth are saved without reference to baptism. But Baptists believe that in accord with the teachings of the New Testament baptism should be administered to those alone who, whether young or old, have become Christians. By it the person baptized makes public confession that he is a disciple of Jesus, being buried with him in baptism and raised again to walk in newness of life. Thus baptism is no saving ordinance, it is not for the unregenerate, but is commanded for everyone who believes. The second respect wherein Baptists differ from others on baptism is that they insist that immersion is the proper mode. When the Baptists first arose in England immersion was not altogether abandoned among pedobaptists, and on that account the practice of immersion did not at first cause much comment, but today it is regarded as their most distinguishing characteristic.

On these principles of the competency of the individual with God and a regenerated church membership depend several other doctrines and practices which distinguish Baptists. A Baptist church is a democracy in which every member has an equal voice. The officers of the church are such as the members elect, and are usually elders and deacons, whose duties, function and tenure of office are governed by the church. There is no room for priest or prelate or pope; the one rule for faith and practice is the New Testament which each member interprets for himself and usually without getting so much at variance with his brethren as to become obnoxious to them. The cardinal principles of the Baptists are also repugnant to the idea of a state church or to any union of church and state, since in matters religious every individual is responsible to God alone, and with this relationship the state has no right to meddle. On the other hand, the church has no right to direct the civic duties of its members.

Many writers of Baptist history have maintained that since the days of the Apostles there has been a succession of churches which have kept up without break the essential principles of the Baptists. Some have devoted entire volumes to the exposition of this view. Such books were eagerly read during the past century, and their contentions accepted without question by many ardent Baptists who were ready to listen hour after hour to lengthy sermons with imposing array of facts and dates and citation of authorities as given by Orchard, intended to establish beyond cavil the antiquity of the Baptists. God had set up His kingdom, it was said, which should never be destroyed; he had founded his church and the gates of hell had not and should not prevail against it. Thus, they maintained, the Baptists had had their churches through all the centuries, and thus Apostolic Christianity had been kept pure in spite of the general persecution and the power of anti-Christ in the apostate churches.

But Baptist historians of more recent years no longer accept these conclusions of the early Baptist writers. As a type of them all, may be taken Newman. In his *History of Anti-pedobaptism*, a work of most able and painstaking scholarship, he shows that there is no documentary evidence for the contention that there have been churches through all the centuries which have kept pure the Apostolic type of Christianity; on the other hand, many of the schismatic parties of Christians through which writers like Orchard trace the Baptist succession had departed even more widely than the Church of Rome from the truth. And, says Newman, it would be hard to prove that from the middle of the second century onward "a single congregation could anywhere be found true in every particular to the Apostolic norm," nay, for a thousand years succeeding the Apostolic age hardly an individual is known to have rightly apprehended the nature of New Testament Christianity. But we are not driven by these considerations to admit that the gates of Hades were prevailing against the Church or that the Kingdom of which Daniel spoke had been destroyed. There were many true believers in all the Christian centuries who attained a high standard of Christian living, even though they were involved in serious errors in doctrine and practice. And as to the churches of this period Newman says: "That a church also may make grave departures in doctrine and practice from the apostolic standard without ceasing to be a church of Christ, must be admitted, or else it must be maintained that during many centuries no church is known to have existed."[1]

As the plan of my work precludes my going any further into this matter of a succession of Baptist churches from the days of the Apostles until now, I must refer any interested reader to the works mentioned. I name here those sects which were the more immediate forerunners of those churches in England which were first called by the name of Baptist and are regarded as the parent churches of all the Baptist churches in Great Britain and America.

These sects are regarded as forerunners of the Baptists because they stood for one or more of what are today regarded as cardinal Baptist principles.

The first sect that comes into prominence as conforming in some way to New Testament standards was the Petrobrusians, of southern France. These got their name from Peter of Bruys, a French priest, whose period of activity extends from 1104 to 1126, when he was burned at the stake. "They appealed to the Scriptures as the sole authority, and rejected the authority of the fathers and councils; they held the church to be a spiritual body, consisting only of believers, and that baptism should not be administered to children before the age of understanding; they denied transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers for the dead, the use of the cross as a sacred symbol and asserted that churches should be pulled down—the latter being probably a reaction against the idolatrous rites then practiced in all the churches they knew.[2]

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[1] A. H. Newman, *History of Anti-pedobaptism* (Philadelphia, 1877), pp. 27f.

In the same century, but about fifty years later, Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, gave up his property and home in order to preach a purer gospel to the people of southern France.[3] Newman maintains that Waldo was the founder of the party that bears his name and not the new leader of an evangelical party that had existed from Apostolic times. The first followers of Waldo in their doctrines and practice seem to have resembled Methodists more than Baptists. In a century they had spread throughout continental Europe, and as they spread had established churches differing somewhat in doctrine and practice from one another. They were strongly anti-Catholic and claimed that the Apostolic succession was through themselves. Only a portion of them, as contemporary records show, rejected infant baptism. They rebaptized those who sought admission to their churches, not because they did not accept infant baptism, but because they did not regard a corrupt priest as a proper administrator. Whether or not they practiced immersion is uncertain. They probably continued unto the time of the Reformation.

The Taborites were another sect which in the fifteenth century appeared in Bohemia in connection with the Hussite movement. It is said that they owed their rise partly to the influence of Wycliffe in England and partly to the Continental Waldenses. It is generally believed, however, that the Taborite movement was only a new direction taken by an older evangelical group which had long existed in Bohemia. They appealed to the authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; denied baptismal regeneration and the real presence in the Lord's Supper, but they continued to baptize infants.

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[2] Vedder, *Baptist History,* Introduction.

[3] Newman, *Hist. of Anti-pedobaptism,* pp. 40ff.

The Bohemian Brethren arose in 1467, as a result of the teachings of Peter Chelcicky of Bohemia. They regarded the apostolic church as the true model from which nothing should be taken away and to which nothing should be added. Though they baptized anew all who became members of their body, they wavered on the matter of infant baptism and finally abandoned all opposition to it.

All these sects, except the Petrobrusians, are generally grouped together as Waldenses. By the end of the fifteenth century, on the eve of the Reformation, the Waldenses were the largest sect in Southern Germany, and were numerous in Prussia, Poland, and Austria. In Bohemia and Moravia alone they numbered two hundred thousand adherents and about four hundred congregations, and had among them many powerful nobles who gave them protection. In the Alpine valleys of Italy there were no fewer than one hundred thousand, and possibly as many others in other parts of Europe than those named. In their zeal for Bible study they had already translated the Scriptures into the vernacular, and in the period from 1456 to 1517 had published fourteen complete editions of the German Bible, four of the Dutch Bible and ninety-eight of the Latin Bible.[4]

Doubtless these sects had many beliefs and practices which Baptists of the present day would not allow; only a few of them rejected infant baptism, and it is not certain that any of them regularly practiced immersion, but all seem to have appealed to the Scriptures as their authority, and all were devoted to Scripture study.

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[4] Newman, *Anti-pedobaptism,* p. 58.

Early in the sixteenth century evangelical Christianity had developed along two lines. In 1507, Luther made the departure that led to the Reformation, and gathered among his followers the greater part of those who were of the party of the Waldenses. About the same time, certainly as early as 1525, those who are known as Anabaptists began to be found in Germany, Switzerland and other countries of Europe. They stood for the authority of the Scriptures, for liberty of conscience, for believers' baptism. Among the early Anabaptists in Germany and Switzerland were many able scholars, who in public debate and written treatises defended their doctrines with much force and skill. By the Roman Catholics they were regarded as the worst of heretics, and they soon came into sharp conflict with the early Protestants who retained infant baptism. The feeling against them was the more violent since no discrimination was made between them and other groups, many of them mystics and fanatics of every shade of belief, and often preachers of doctrines which were subversive of all government. The true Anabaptists in company with all the other sects were repressed with one of the most bitter persecutions that ever disgraced Christian peoples. By the year 1530 two thousand Anabaptists, including Hubmaier and most of the other leaders, had been executed. Even in Switzerland the Anabaptist preachers, many of them men of high birth and much culture, were persecuted unto death. A few years later sixteen hundred suffered martyrdom in the Tyrol, the Alpine valleys of northern Italy, then under the control of Austria. The only country in which they found safe refuge was Moravia, which a hundred years later was to become a very shambles for the slaughter of their successors in the faith.[5]

Many of the Anabaptists became involved in gross doctrinal errors. Most baleful of all in its subsequent effects was the preaching of millenarianism. Perilous at any period, in times of persecution and among ignorant people it may give rise to the most dangerous fanaticism. So it was with the Anabaptists of Western Germany and Holland. Largely through the preaching of the near approach of the Lord to deliver His saints and punish their persecutors certain fanatical leaders were able to gather at Münster in Westphalia, in the year 1534, great numbers of simple-minded Dutch and German peasants, who believed that the Lord was now to establish his kingdom on earth. Under the direction of Jan Matthys, a Dutch Anabaptist, who assumed the role of Enoch, and his deputies, John of Leyden and Gerton Gloster, they seized the religious institutions of the city and drove out the Catholics and Lutherans. Matthys now declared that it was revealed to him that Münster was the New Jerusalem. Soon multitudes of the simple-minded were streaming into the city from all directions. A theocracy was set up with Matthys as king. When after a few weeks Matthys was killed in a sally, John of Leyden, in accord with what he claimed was a divine revelation, became king. Alleging another divine revelation he established polygamy and took unto himself four wives. One of these he afterwards charged with infidelity and beheaded with his own hand in the market place of the city. For more than a year these wild excesses continued, while he continued to exercise despotic sway. In June, 1535, the besiegers under the leadership of the expelled bishops succeeded in taking the city. They put to death John of Leyden and his lieutenants after visiting them with cruel tortures.

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[5] Newman, *Anti-pedobaptism*, pp. 232f.

With reference to this Münster affair, Newman has said:

> The extent to which the Baptist cause has been impeded by the Münster Kingdom is incalculable. The Baptist name is odious throughout continental Europe today because of it. In England and in America the opponents of the Baptists long urged

their extermination on the ground that they might be expected to reënact the horrors of Münster.[6]

The Münster excesses gave a specious reason for severer persecution of the Anabaptists. They were all but exterminated in every country except Holland. About this time Menno Simon, a Catholic priest, became a convert to the Anabaptist position on the baptism of infants. Avoiding the extravagances and fanaticism of the men of Münster, he organized societies of Anabaptists who lived quiet, peaceful lives. They soon became numerous in Holland and Western Germany. Like the Quakers of later days they were opposed to taking part in war. Before many years this tenet subjected them to persecution. Most of the present Mennonites are now in the United States where there is none to molest or make them afraid.

The persecutions of the Anabaptists in continental Europe drove many of them to seek refuge abroad, but we hear nothing of them in England before the fall of Münster in 1535. In the persecutions that followed many fled across the channel. The first were of the Hoffmanite type, that is, the more fanatical sort who were looking for the establishment of the millennium, and expecting the Lord to execute justice with the sword on their enemies. Under subsequent persecutions the Mennonites also came.

But though there were no Anabaptists in England before this time, there were many Christians in that country whose doctrines and practices were tending towards present day Baptist principles. Crosby and other early Baptist historians maintain that from the year 597, when Christianity was introduced among the Saxons of England, for 300 years, baptism was administered only to believers and not to infants. After the introduction of infant baptism, the mode continued to be immersion until the accession of James the First, in 1603.[7]

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[6] *Ibid,* p. 37.

[7] Crosby, *History of Eng. Baptists,* Introduction, p. liv.

In many other respects historians are generally agreed the Christianity of England was in the earlier centuries of a "distinctly purer and more primitive type than in Southern Europe and Asia Minor. This was owing to the isolation of Britain from the corrupting influences of Greece and Rome, the extraordinary attention given to Bible study, and the missionary zeal and activity of the early English Christians."[8]

A powerful help and impulse was given to Bible study by the Wycliffe translation of the Bible into English in the year 1378. This was almost a hundred years before the introduction of printing, but Wycliffe's "poor Priests" copied his Bible and distributed it, in whole or in parts, to the people of England, who with God's word in their own tongue in their possession soon knew more of its teaching than the lazy priests of the church who had only the Latin Vulgate, of which many of them understood very little.

Soon after the translation and distribution of Wycliffe's Bible, and perhaps in consequence of it, there arose in England a sect of Christians called Lollards. They were evangelical Christians, insisted on a regenerate church membership, were opposed to display in church buildings and furniture and an elaborate liturgy. They regarded the Lord's Supper as a memorial service, denying the transsubstantiation theory of the Catholics. They repudiated indulgences, pilgrimages, veneration of images, relics and holy places, almsgiving, prayers to Mary and the saints, offerings and intercession for the dead, auricular confession, monastic vows, and sacerdotal celibacy, in all these things being at variance with the Roman Catholic Church which until 1536 was the state church in England. They were free from most of the extravagances which brought discredit on the continental Christians who opposed the Roman Church. Originating as a distinct sect about the year 1398 they continued, amid many bloody persecutions, for more than a century and spread over England, Scotland and Wales. They were not Baptists but they proclaimed the doctrine of separation of church and state and the independence of the local church. They may be regarded as the forerunners of all in England who both in the established church and out of it are opposed to sacerdotalism and elaborate liturgies. They prepared England for the ready acceptance of revolt from the Roman Catholic Church, and had as their successors the various independent and nonconformist Christians of the United Kingdom, including the Baptists.

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[8] Newman, *Anti-pedobaptism*, p. 27.

It is only after the coming of the Dutch refugees to England that we begin to find notice of the Anabaptists in the island. When these were brought to the attention of Henry the Eighth, he ordered that they should either be expelled or exterminated. While most of the Anabaptist congregations of England were Dutch, some of them seem to have been English. Henry visited all alike with the most heartless persecution. Men, women and children were burned at the stake. The three children of Henry, who in order succeeded to the throne, were no less rigorous in their persecution. The youthful and pious Edward, Bloody Mary, and the Virgin Queen were alike in their zeal to rid the kingdom of the detested Anabaptists, and pursued other independents in religion with scarcely less ardor. Under the blessing of God by the year 1580, Holland had again become a land where all creeds were tolerated, and there many of the persecuted English Christians found a refuge; and their migrations thither did not cease until James the First had been on the throne for several years.

## III

## THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

Though there is well established historical evidence of the existence of Anabaptists in London during the last years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the first years of that of King James the First, and though there are traditions that Baptist churches were to be found before this period in Kent which continued their existence and afterwards united with the General Baptists, yet the Baptist churches of England whose rise is well attested by history did not have their origin in Anabaptist churches, but were a development of the Separatist movement that took definite form under the lead of Robert Browne about the year 1580.

This Robert Browne was a Puritan preacher and teacher. He believed the government of the Church of England and the Presbyterian churches equally unscriptural, and preached a pure democracy in church government. He also insisted that it was both the right and the duty of worthy Christians to withdraw from apostate and corrupt churches. Many under his influence, despite the persecution to which they were subjected, were led to form churches which were called Separatists.

One of these Separatist churches was that at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire, which is a town on the river Trent about sixty miles north of London. That the people of Gainsborough were above the average in culture may be inferred from the fact that in 1586 Queen Elizabeth had chartered a grammar school for this borough. Here, in 1602 John Smyth led in the formation of a Separatist church. Smyth was a graduate of Cambridge University and one of the first scholars of the time. After leaving the University he had been a minister of the Church of England. The church he established in Gainsborough has two claims to distinction.

The first claim is based on the fact that about the year 1604 three men who were afterwards to become leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers became members of it. These were John Robinson, William Brewster, and William Bradford. Later they withdrew to establish the church at Scrooby in the neighborhood. In 1607 or 1608 they went to Amsterdam, and the next year to Leyden. Meeting with poor encouragement there they were allowed by the English government in 1620 to lead the colony to Plymouth Rock.

The second mark of distinction of Smyth's church at Gainsborough is that from its membership was formed the first historical Baptist Church of England. Late in the year 1606 or early 1607, Smyth and many in his church, harassed by continuous persecution, left "their houses and habitations and means of livelihood" in Gainsborough, and went to Amsterdam in Holland, where they heard "there was freedom of religion for all men." There was already in Amsterdam a Separatist English church under the leadership of Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth. Smyth and his party did not unite with this church, which is usually called the "Ancient Church," but organized a church for themselves, which was known as the "Second Church of Amsterdam." Not many months had elapsed before Smyth put himself at variance with the "Ancient Church" by a number of contentions, the most important being that true spiritual worship was impaired by the use of hymn books and a printed Bible, or at least that the Bible if used in the church should be not a translation but the original Hebrew or Greek.

In 1609 Smyth and his church made another departure from the regular Separatists. Having reached the conviction that infant baptism was unscriptural and void, and especially that the church of Johnson and Ainsworth was a "false church, falsely constituted in the baptizing of infants and their own unbaptized estate," they "dissolved their church, . . . and Mr. Smyth, being pastor thereof, gave over his office, as did also the deacons, and devised to enter into a new communion by renouncing their former baptism."[1]

As there was no baptized person among them it is said that Smyth first baptized himself and then baptized the other members of his company. That Smyth baptized himself was the reproach made against him by his adversaries, Ainsworth and Johnson. Hence he is now generally known as John Smyth the Se-Baptist. Smyth all but admits that he did baptize himself, but his language may imply no more than Crosby[2] took him to imply, that is, some member of the company baptized Smyth and Smyth then baptized the others. We know that this was the method followed by Roger Williams when he established the first Baptist church in New England.

In a few weeks Smyth had become uncertain as to the right of himself and his congregation to institute a new baptism, and at the same time he adopted many of the views of the Mennonites, and sought to lead his members into their church. Because of these views he became obnoxious to many of his brethren. In some way a minority in the church under the lead of Thomas Helwys and John Murton excommunicated Smyth and thirty others who held with him. The others, nine or ten in number, kept the church intact under the pastoral care of Helwys and Murton. They soon decided that it was cowardly for the English Christians in fear of persecution to abandon the homeland, that their absence "had been the overthrow of religion in this island; the best, the ablest, and greater part being gone, and leaving behind some few who, by the others' departure, have had their affliction and contempt increased, hath been the cause of many falling back, and their adversaries rejoicing." Accordingly in 1611 or 1612 they left Holland and came to London where they built their first church at Newgate. By the year 1626 they had five churches; by the year 1644 the number of churches had increased to forty-seven; on the accession of Charles the Second in 1660 their membership had increased to 20,000.

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[1] Ainsworth, quoted by Newman, *History of the Baptist Churches in the United States,* p. 40.

[2] Tho. Crosby, *History of English Baptists* (3 vols., 1738-40), Vol. I, 96f. See Smyth's statement in Newman, *History of Anti-pedobaptism,* pp. 384f.

These were what are known as General Baptists, a name intended to signify that they were not Calvinistic but Arminians in their theology. This is fully set out in articles five and six of their first English Confession of Faith, that of 1611.[3] It was to one variety of these General Baptists that the Baptists of the Albemarle region of North Carolina owed their origin, since Paul Palmer was of that faith. Hence it is important for us to determine when these General Baptists became Baptists in fact as well as in name. There is no question that from the time of their first organization in 1609 they rejected the baptism of infants and upheld believers' baptism. It is also clear from their first confession of faith as well as from other documents that they stood for liberty of conscience and democracy in church government. In these matters and in their views of the character of the Lord's Supper they were in essential agreement from the first with the English Baptists of today, radically differing from the Mennonites and Anabaptists. The further question arises when did these General Baptists become immersionists and thus in their practice of the ordinance of baptism come into full accord with modern Baptist usage. Tradition is uniform and unanimous that they were immersionists from their first organization in 1609, but history is silent, or at least not definite for many years.

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[3] Crosby, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Appendix IX; W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, p. 87.

All are agreed that in 1660 all the General Baptists of England were already immersionists. In that year all the General Baptist churches of the kingdom, whose membership had reached 20,000, sent representatives to London, where they put forth a Confession of Faith, that they might make known their principles to the new king, Charles the Second. Article eleven of this Confession declares, "That the right and only way of gathering churches, is first to teach or preach the Gospel to the sons and daughters of men, and then to *Baptise* (this is in English to *Dip*)."[4] By the year 1660, then, immersion was the practice of the General Baptist churches.

The Confession of 1660 was the first that spoke for all the General Baptists. But in 1651 thirty churches in Leicestershire, Lincoln and neighboring counties put forth a Confession, article forty-eight of which declares, "That the way and manner of baptising, both before the death of Christ, and since his resurrection and ascension, was to go into the water and be baptized." Since this is not a direct declaration for immersion, and as affusion might be administered to a candidate kneeling in water, some Baptist historians[5] seem not to be convinced that dipping is the mode referred to here. But as some Baptists had already been, according to many contemporaries, "plunging over head and ears" those whom they baptized, I think it almost certain that only immersion is meant.

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[4] Crosby, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, App. IV; McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, p. 115.

[5] For example, McGlothlin, who, in *Baptist Confessions*, p. 110, says the Standard Confession of 1660 was the "first to prescribe dipping or immersion as the essential form of baptism."

The Confession put out by Helyws and Murton in 1611, and which of course spoke for their church alone, does not prescribe the mode of baptism, but is concerned with the subjects, declaring in Article 14, "That Baptisme or washing with water, is the outward manifestacion off dieing unto sinn, and walkeing in newness of life, Roman 6.2, 3.4. And therefore in no wise appertaineth to infants."

Though the mode of baptism is not prescribed here, the following considerations indicate that it was immersion. John Smyth who organized the church on the new basis at Amsterdam had been a minister of the Church of England while immersion was still the prescribed mode of baptism, and in his ministry in that church had most probably used immersion alone, as well as after he became pastor of the Independent church at Gainsborough. The members of his church whom he baptized in his constitution of the new church at Amsterdam had all probably been immersed in infancy, and were all more familiar with that mode of baptizing than any other. In 1614, within three years after the portion of the church which sided with Helwys and Murton had returned to England Leonard Busher, in a tract still extant, declared immersion to be the proper mode of baptism. Busher's tract, "Religion's Peace, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience," was addressed to King James the First and to Parliament. While its primary purpose is indicated in its title, the tract is almost a complete Baptist confession of faith, since he introduces incidentally many points of peculiar Baptist doctrine and among them baptism, going a little out of his way to insist that it is dipping.[6]

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[6] Busher bases one of his arguments for liberty of conscience on the doctrine of a regenerated church membership. In urging this point he says: "In the time of the gospel he will not have the people constrained, but as many as receive the word gladly they are to be added to the

It is probable that Busher's tract was published in Holland, for at that time nothing could be printed or circulated in England except under royal license, and the publications of Dissenters as well as Dissenters themselves were most cruelly repressed. But as soon as there was some liberty to print, in the year 1641, a pamphlet was published in London in defense of immersion as the only correct form of baptism. The author was Edward Barber, who had been pastor of a General Baptist church in London, but who describes himself as "Citizen, and Merchant-Taylor of London." His pamphlet was entitled *A Small Treatise of Baptisme, or Dipping.* In the preface Barber says that he had prepared the treatise during an imprisonment of eleven months' duration, which imprisonment he says was brought about by his denying that the sprinkling of infants was God's ordinance; in other words for insisting that believers alone should be baptized and that the mode should be immersion. In his preface he refutes those who had affirmed that "there was no plaine text of the dipping of any woman." He further defends "those that professe and practise" dipping against the reproach of their enemies that they were Anabaptists, and challenges any to show that they are in error "in denying the dipping of infants." He also declared "our practice" of dipping believers to be that instituted by Jesus Christ. Now when at last

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church by baptism. And therefore Christ commanded his disciples to *teach all nations and to baptize* them; that is to preach the word of salvation to every creature of all sorts of nations, that are worthy and willing to receive it. And such as shall willingly and gladly receive it he hath commanded to be baptized in the water; that is dipped for dead in the water. And therefore the apostle saith, *Else what shall they do, who are baptized for dead, if the dead be not raised why are they baptized for dead?* And therefore he saith, *We are buried then with him by baptism, &c.*" When we consider that this was composed almost contemporaneously with the return of the churches of Helwys and Murton to England and was intended to gain the King's favor for this church, we are confirmed in the conclusion that Busher was speaking of the practice of that church in the matter of immersion. Else his reference to the mode of baptism would have been very inept and contrary to his purpose.

had come "a year of Jubilee," when Parliament had put an end to the persecution of Christians, and opened its ears "to hear whatever shall be spoken for God's glory," Barber believed that he should speak out, and, if he should not, the stones of the street would cry out, for he felt that the Lord had raised him up, "amongst some others," to divulge the glorious truth that baptism should be by dipping. He also rebukes those Independents who still clung to the baptism of the Church of England, insisting that there was no middle ground between the teaching of the Church of England and that of the Baptists in this matter of baptism. As "those who professe and practice" dipping of believers could have been none other than General Baptists and as Barber was writing of a practice before his eleven months' imprisonment it is certain that immersion was before 1640 already the mode of baptism in general use among the Baptists that Barber knew. Still another consideration that in my view puts the matter beyond question is that there is neither any record nor tradition that any other mode of baptism was ever practised by any of the Baptists of England.[7]

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[7] See the clear exposition of the facts in this matter in the book of J. T. Christian, *Baptist History Vindicated.* Barber's pamphlet was reprinted in 1896 by the Baptist Book Concern of Louisville, Ky. In his work Christian completely demolishes the contention of President W. T. Whitsett of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary that immersion was "invented" and introduced into England by the Particular Baptists in 1641, and that before that time Baptists had used sprinkling and pouring. Whitsett had further insisted that Roger Williams was baptized by sprinkling in 1639, while immersion was not used among the Baptists of Rhode Island before 1644. Whitsett's views, becoming known about 1895, were at once fiercely assailed by many prominent Baptists of the South and the most of the Baptist press—in my view justly. He had first published his views not under his own name, but anonymously in the editorial columns of the New York *Independent,* an indefensible proceeding. When he had made a final statement of his position in his book, *A Question in Baptist History,* his critics went further and claimed that he had made a perverse use of his authorities, in that he had omitted such portions of them as would have weakened his contentions. To sustain this charge they published some of the earliest pamphlets in which baptism among the Baptists of England was discussed. In my view the critics of Whitsett were entirely justified. It was shown, for in-

In view of the considerations set forth above I cannot accept the conclusion of Dexter and the more recent Baptist historians that immersion was first introduced into England by the Particular Baptists in 1641.[8] It seems much more probable that immersion was consistently employed by the General Baptists from the organization of their first church in Amsterdam in 1611. We may be thankful for one result of the discussion: it has established beyond dispute that the Baptists did not borrow baptism by immersion from others, and as they have been almost the sole defenders of this mode of baptism, so they were the first modern denomination to require it as the proper and Scriptural mode of performing this sacred ordinance. That a church should be composed only of believers baptized by immersion is the most distinctive Baptist tenet.

Another characteristic tenet of Baptist faith was first promulgated in the Amsterdam Confession of 1611: civil government is recognized, in Article 24, as having a right to the allegiance and support of members of the church, both in peace, with "tribute, custome and all other duties," and in war, "by the servants of God that are under their government with their lives and all that they have accord-

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stance, that he had disregarded and omitted from the discussion all the matter I have quoted above from the preface of Barber's pamphlet except one passage, and that he had misquoted that in a way to favor his contention. There could be no justification for such conduct, and Dr. Whitsett was forced to leave the Seminary. But his book is still quoted by pedobaptist writers to discredit the Baptists. Of Baptist historians Vedder and Newman accept Whitsett's view that the Church of John Smyth was not yet a Baptist church because, Whitsett claims, it used affusion and not immersion. McGlothlin seems to accept Whitsett's conclusions in full, insisting that immersion was prescribed in no Baptist confession of faith before 1644. Vedder recognizes that immersion was earlier known among the Baptists, but no one of the three has discussed the bearing of Barber's pamphlet on the question. The reasons assigned by Vedder and Newman for believing that the church of Smyth and Helwys and Murton at first used affusion do not seem satisfactory to me; in fact, Newman does not accept the reason urged by Vedder as bearing on the question.

[8] It may be observed that John Brown in an article, "Puritanism and Non-Conformity," in *Social England,* IV, 57, adopts the view that the first English Baptists were Mennonite in their origin and probably baptized by affusion.

ing to the first institution of that holy ordinance." Article 25 provides explicitly for the taking of oaths in courts of law. Smyth had previously declared "That the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine," but this seems to have been the first time that any religious body had declared that the church must not "meddle" in affairs of state.

Hubmaier, indeed, the great forerunner of the Baptists, had, as early as 1527, in one of the ablest of his many tracts, maintained the right of liberty of conscience, and, in a treatise on magistracy, had formulated the views adopted a hundred years later by the General Baptists, rightly discerning, as Newman says,[9] that the rejection of magistracy was "one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of New Testament Christianity, since it caused Antipedobaptists everywhere to be looked upon as enemies of civil government and their presence as a menace to law and order."

Hubmaier's views, however, were disregarded by the religious bodies of his day. Other Anabaptists, as well as those of Münster, sought to organize a church, a New Jerusalem, to which alone its subjects should owe allegiance civil and religious. Still others, such as the Mennonites, while admitting the necessity of civil government, forbade their members to assume such duties of citizenship as filling offices of state, serving in war, and testifying on oath in the courts. Along with such prohibitions usually went that of marriage outside the church membership. Quite new and distinctive was the declaration of the General Baptists against any restriction or interference by the church with their members in their conscientious performance of their duties to the State. In religious matters allegiance was due the church, in political matters allegiance was due the state, and with the allegiance due the other neither the state nor the church should interfere. The Particular Baptists in their first Confession, that of 1644, sections 52 and 53, express the same great principle, saying, "thus we desire to give unto God that which is God's and unto Caesar that which is Caesar's."

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[9] *Anti-pedobaptism,* 96f., 183f.

It would be impossible to overestimate the value of the declaration of this principle in clearing the way for the progress of the Baptists, both General and Particular. In the face of such declarations and the practices of the Baptists consonant with them it became increasingly difficult to decry the Baptists as enemies of society. Even their bitterest opponents had to admit that they were "neither heretics nor schismatics, but tender-hearted (weak) Christians," while such able and respected men as Robert Brook, Daniel Rogers, and Jeremy Taylor, the most famous preacher of the day, in published treatises, showed good-will towards them.[10]

As some knowledge of the history of the English Baptists of the seventeenth century is necessary for the correct understanding of any subsequent Baptist history I am tracing it here in brief outline.

At first the progress of the Baptists was necessarily slow. The little church which returned from Amsterdam could not have numbered more than forty souls. Of the original forty-two who constituted the first Amsterdam Baptist Church, thirty-one had followed Smyth in his defection, but probably there had been accessions to the little group which remained with Helwys and Murton before they left Holland. In fifteen years, by 1626, they had congregations in London, Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry, and Tiverton. In pamphlets of the time they are said to be making multitudes of disciples.[11] From 1614 on they were publishing their views and pleading for liberty of conscience in a series of tracts which are still preserved and are regarded as among the ablest expositions of that doctrine. After 1626 the publication of these tracts ceased, probably owing to the fact that after the death of James the First and the accession of Charles the First severer measures were taken to repress all Dissenters. Until 1640 William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, with his High Commission court, was trying to harry from the kingdom all Puritans and other Dissenters. "Under his direction," says Macaulay, "every corner of the realm was subjected to a constant and minute inspection. Every little congregation of separatists was tracked out and broken up. Even the devotions of private families could not escape the vigilance of his spies." Yet even in this time the General Baptists made progress. According to Knight,[12] before the opening of the Civil Wars, in 1642, more than twenty churches were organized in the county of Kent alone, while other churches were established in London, under the care of Mr. Lamb, John Griffith, John Gosnold, and Edward Barber.[13] In their great zeal they met for worship under cover of darkness in groves and meadows and in hay lofts, and continued to increase in numbers while many bishops were assuring Laud that there was not a single Dissenter in their jurisdictions.[14] For the twenty years between the convening of the Long Parliament and the Restoration, in 1660, despite the persecutions to which the Presbyterian establishment, from 1644 to 1653, subjected all who did not conform to their views, the General Baptists had a phenomenal growth. In 1660 they were able to report, at their general meeting in London, 20,000 communicants. In 1690 they numbered 30,000.

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[10] Crosby, *op. cit.*, I, 165ff.

[11] Crosby, *op. cit.*, I, 139.

The fact that the General Baptists were Arminians caused them to be regarded with suspicion in a nation so thoroughly Calvinistic as was the England of the first half of the seventeenth century. Arminianism is classed by the orthodox writers of that time as heresy, along with Socinianism and Pelagianism.[15] That a sect proclaiming it should have, in that age, gained so many adherents, is in itself strong testimony to its attractiveness to the popular mind. To the sterner sort Arminianism was still a heresy and a scandal. Hence it was inevitable that if any Calvinists became converted to the Baptist view they would have no fellowship with the General Baptists. Accordingly, we find that the first English Calvinistic Baptist Church had an independent origin. This church was a portion of an Independent Church formed by friendly separation from the parent church on September 12, 1633, and was made up of such as believed that baptism should not be administered to infants. Their minister was John Spilsbury. According to one account which, however, is disputed, it was 1640 before the members of this church became convinced that they ought to be baptized by immersion. As there was no one among them who had been so baptized, except possibly in infancy, and as they desired to receive their baptism from a proper administrator, one who himself had been baptized by immersion, they sent Mr. Richard Blunt, one of their ministers, to Holland, where they had heard were some who baptized by this mode. Here he was baptized by immersion, and returning, baptized the other members of the church. If we are to believe this story, we may suppose that the reason for not applying to the General Baptists of England for immersion was probably that the General Baptists were known to be Arminians, and doubt might have been cast on the validity of their baptism because of the stories current with reference to the self-baptism of John Smyth, the founder of their first church.

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[12] Richard Knight, *History of the General or Sir Principle Baptists* (Providence, 1827), p. 30.

[13] *Ibid*, p. 31.

[14] Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter I.

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[15] Featley, *The Dippers Dipt, etc.* But even before 1640 many of the higher divines of the Church of England, like Laud, had become Arminians. "A divine of that age, who was asked by a simple country gentlemen what the Arminians held, answered, with as much truth as wit, that they held all the best bishoprics and deaneries in England." (Macaulay.)

Immediately these Particular Baptists began to increase in numbers. In 1644 they put out their Confession of Faith, which, like the other early Baptist Confessions, was not so much a creed to which the members of the churches should conform as a statement addressed to the world to show the character and harmlessness of their principles. After its publication it was no longer possible for the pulpit and press to represent them as Arminians, Pelagians, Socinians, Soul-Sleepers, all of whom were thought by Calvinists to hold tenets equally erroneous and dangerous.[16] Though exact figures are not available they too made great progress during the period of the Civil Wars and the Protectorate, and by 1660 had no fewer than twenty thousand communicants in their churches. All authorities are agreed that at this time the Baptists were the most numerous dissenting sect in England. Among their ministers were some of the ablest men of the kingdom.

But persecution of the Baptists did not cease with the assembling of the Long Parliament. The old set of persecutors headed by Laud was indeed got rid of, but another set scarcely less cruel at once appeared. The effect of Laud's administration of ecclesiastical affairs had been to drive many in England from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism, and the courts of the Star Chamber and the High Commission called all Presbyterians who did not make absolute submission to King Charles the First in all his extravagant and unlawful demands.[17] So it came about that from 1643 to 1654 Presbyterianism supplanted Episcopacy as the established form of worship and discipline. Seemingly intoxicated with the hope of establishing their church for all time in the kingdom, the most noted Presbyterian divines of that day showed that they were no less intolerant of liberty of conscience and worship than were Laud and Strafford. Dr. Calamy, one of the ablest among them, in a sermon before the House of Commons, October 22, 1644, with much eloquence and power urged upon its members that to tolerate errors and heresies in religion was to approve them. Dr. Baxter declared that he abhorred toleration; Prynn maintained that when Presbyterianism should once be established all Independents would be conscience bound to submit to it; while Mr. Edwards, another preacher of the same faith, hoped to have the Baptists found in error, when "the Parliament should forbid all dipping and take the same course with all Dippers, as the senate of Zurich did,"—that is, burn them at the stake. The Assembly of Divines which met at Westminster at this time refused to make any concession to Independents, in which decision they were encouraged by a letter sent to them by a meeting of the whole body of London ministers, on December 18, 1645.[18]

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[16] Dr. Featley says: "If we give credit to their Confession . . . they are neither Heretics nor Schismatics, but tender-hearted Christians upon whom, through false suggestions, the hand of authority fell heavy whilst the hierarchy stood; for they neither teach free-will, nor falling from grace, with the Arminians; nor deny original sin, with the Pelagians; nor disclaim magistracy, with the Jesuits; nor maintain plurality of wives, with the Polygamists; nor community of goods, with the Apostolics; nor going naked, with the Adamites; much less the mortality of the soul, with the Epicures and Psychopannychists." Quoted in Crosby, *op. cit.* I, 171.

To carry into effect the plans of the Presbyterians, Parliament passed several severe laws, in regard to one of which, that of May 2, 1648, Crosby says that it was so cruel and bloody that only the Popish law *for burning heretics* may be compared to it. The influence of Cromwell and the fact that many Baptists were serving in his army gave them some measure of protection. But numbers of noted Baptist ministers were, under the Presbyterian rule, imprisoned and punished in other ways. Among these were Edward Barber, Henry Denne, Mr. Coppe, Mr. Lamb, Paul Hobson, Hanserd Knollys. For many years, even after the Restoration, these laws were used as instruments of persecution by mayors and petty justices in remote towns.

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[17] Rapin, *History of England,* II, p. 292, quoted in Crosby, *op. cit.,* I, 146.

[18] "We cannot dissemble," they say, "how upon the forementioned grounds, we detest and abhor the much endeavoured toleration. Our bowels, our bowels are stirred within us, and we could drown ourselves in tears, when we call to mind how long and sharp a travail this kingdom hath been in for many years together, to bring forth the blessed fruit of a pure and perfect reformation; and now at last after all our prayers, and dolours, and expectations, this real and thorough reformation is in danger of being strangled in its birth by a lawless toleration, that strives to be brought forth before it."

The Presbyterian regime was ended in 1654 by Cromwell, who put in its place a kind of state church. This church was non-episcopal and evangelical in character and broad enough to embrace nearly all groups of Protestants in England, while there was ample toleration of Dissenters. It was endowed by the State. Some of the Baptist leaders and churches approved this system. On the board of Triers, whose function was to select pastors for the various benefices, were some of the abler Baptist ministers, and at least two Baptists were approved and served as pastors of state churches until 1660.[19]

During the time of the Protectorate the Baptist churches of London lost many members who were carried away by a wind of a new doctrine, Quakerism. George Fox, the founder of this sect, had begun to preach the doctrine of the Inner Light about 1647. He had all the zeal of a prophet directly inspired from heaven, and sometimes he seems to have assumed that role. Preaching with great earnestness and courage wherever he could find an audience, he was able in a short time to win many adherents. Among these were many Baptists. In London especially there was so great a defection from the Baptist churches to Quakerism that the report spread that all had fallen away. It is probable that the greatest loss was in those churches which had unlearned pastors and whose members were ignorant. After this the Baptist leaders took pains to indoctrinate their flocks against Quakerism. This was dealt with in a revision of their Confession which the Particular Baptists put out at this time. To it was appended a pamphlet of eight pages, which, says McGlothlin,[20] was a "burning and powerful plea for biblical Christianity against the views of Quakers and Ranters." One concession the Baptists had already made to Quaker views. In the 1651 edition of their Confession they omitted the article enjoining support of the ministry. The ground thus yielded has been difficult to regain, in fact, has never been entirely regained, while over it there has been much strife and division.

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[19] "Cromwell's Established Church recognized no one form of ecclesiastical organization; it had no Church courts, no Church assemblies, no Church laws or ordinances. Nothing was said about rites and ceremonies, nothing even about the sacraments. The mode of administering the Lord's Supper, and also Baptism, was left an open question to be determined by each congregation for itself. All that the Commissioners dealt with was the personal piety and intellectual fitness of the minister presented to the living. If he was shown to be worthy he was at once installed. The Church buildings were regarded as the property of the several parishes, and in one was to be found a Presbyterian minister, in another an Independent, and in a third a Baptist." John Brown in *Social England,* IV, 357f.

Notwithstanding the fact that Cromwell had protected the Baptists from the persecutions of "hireling priests whose Gospel is their maw," there were some among them who had not approved his assumption of the Protectorate. After his death many had joined with those who invited Charles the Second to return. Hardly was he seated on the throne of his fathers, when on July 26, 1660, a group of Baptists presented a petition to him pleading their good will and loyalty and asking for royal protection and freedom to worship after their own way. In reply the King graciously assured them "that he would have particular care that none should trouble them on account of their consciences in things pertaining to religion."

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[20] *Baptist Confessions*, p. 199.

But the King, whom we have many reasons for believing sincere in his promise, was wholly unable to repress the spirit of persecution which at this time arose against Puritanism and every form of dissent, a persecution which was shared in by two very diverse elements of the English people. First, there were the irreligious and indifferent who had been galled for twenty years by the yoke of a stern Puritanism, and now believed they had license to retaliate on their tormentors. The second class was the overzealous partisans of Episcopacy, who welcomed the opportunity to reëstablish prelacy and avenge themselves on those who had driven their ministers from their special privilege and power. Without waiting for royal sanction, which they doubtless took for granted, riotous parties, led by eminent cavaliers, rode about the country armed with swords and pistols, hunting out the hated Non-conformists, ransacking their houses for arms, and terrorizing women and children, so that some died of fright and others fled for their lives. Those of the baser sort expressed their contempt for the Baptists in blasphemous ways.[21]

In the section on the colonization of North Carolina, these persecutions, especially the efforts of the government to exterminate dissent, will be spoken of at greater length. After ten or twelve years they had spent their greatest fury and the enforcement of laws against Dissenters was somewhat relaxed. While the Quakers were the greatest sufferers[22] the Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists suffered little less.

One result of these persecutions was to draw Dissenters of all names closer together. In the face of the common

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[12] Crosby, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 28ff.

[22] See the article in the ninth edition of the *Enc. Britannica*, article "Friends," speaking of the period from 1660-1689: "The number who died in prisons approached 400, and at least 100 more suffered from violence and ill-usage. A petition to the First Parliament of Charles II, stated that 3179 had been imprisoned; the number rose to 4,500 in 1662, the Fifth-Monarch outbreak, in which the Friends were in no way concerned, being responsible for the increase."

enemy they were ready to minimize differences and to emphasize points of agreement. The General Baptists, in a new confession published in 1679, called the "Orthodox Creed," showed a willingness to compromise with their Particular Baptist brethren on the matter of greatest difference, Arminianism and Calvinism. Regrettably the Particular Baptists did not show a corresponding spirit. In their Confession of 1677, known as "The Second London Confession," and in the frequent reprints of it, the Calvinism is even more pronounced than in the Confession of 1644.

This Second London Confession, usually referred to as the Confession of 1689, deserves notice as marking some changes in Baptist tenets and because of its influence on future Baptist beliefs. It was in reality an adaptation to the peculiar views of the Baptists of the famous Westminster Confession, which the Presbyterians put out in 1648. Although the new Confession claims to adhere in substance to the first Particular Baptist Confession of 1644, it differs in several important matters. In it the administration of the ordinance of baptism is expressly made the function of ministers and deacons, whereas in the Confession of 1644 it is declared that in accord with Scripture the right to administer this ordinance was "no where tyed to a particular Church, officer, or person extraordinarily sent." The same provisions as to administrators applies to the Lord's Supper. Thus the new Confession prescribed a more rigid ecclesiasticism, conforming nearly to that of the Westminster Confession, as do the statements on the Scriptures, the Sabbath, and Marriage. And most important of all and far-reaching in its future influence was the rigid Calvinism which it stated in the most precise language. While in many respects it was an admirable statement of Christian principles, we must not be blind to the fact that it gave occasion for the hyper-Calvinism which has since that time been the bane of many Baptist churches. As an immediate effect it seems to have frozen the genial current of Baptist spontaneity and to have brought in a stiff formalism in Baptist modes of thinking and expression. Possibly it was one of the chief factors in checking Baptist progress in England. After its publication an end came to the phenomenal increase which had persisted even amid the persecutions of Laud, the Presbyterians, and the Establishment of the Restoration. It was with a hyper-Calvinism learned from this Confession that, when a hundred years later the young Carey was urging the obligation of English Baptists to give the Gospel to all nations, Doctor Ryland said to him sternly: "Sit down, young man, when the Lord gets ready to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine." And the wreckage wrought by this same hyper-Calvinism may be found over many tracts of American Baptist history.

The General Baptists on the other hand suffered much from uncertainty of doctrine. Many of their leaders and churches turned to Unitarianism. Only a remnant of the 30,000, which they numbered in 1690, remained long true to the "Orthodox Creed." For lack of an educated ministry errors of faith crept in. It was only after the Evangelical Revival of the middle of the next century that signs of new life began to appear among Baptists both Particular and General. By the end of the century they were less rigidly Calvinistic and more evangelical, and foreign missions were begun under Carey. In another hundred years nearly all the Baptists of England and Wales had united into what is called the Union. Today they number nearly half a million.

## IV

## BAPTISTS IN OTHER AMERICAN COLONIES

### 1639-1730

The English Baptists influenced the early Baptists of North Carolina only through tradition and indirectly through the Baptists of other colonies. No English Baptist preacher came to North Carolina, but it is probable that among the colonists from the first were many of the Baptist faith, for it is certain that from the settlement Baptist principles on such matters as freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and democracy in government were prevalent in colonial North Carolina. Nor can it be said that the Baptists of North Carolina owed their origin to the missionary efforts of Baptists of other provinces. The first General Baptist churches in North Carolina were organized by a man who had been living in the province for several years, while the first Separate Baptist Church, that at Sandy Creek, was founded by a man impelled only by his own missionary zeal. The Baptist churches of North Carolina are almost indigenous. But it will help us to a better understanding of the Baptist history of North Carolina to indicate just what progress the Baptists had made in other colonies before they began to build churches here.

In the first permanent English colony, that of Jamestown, no trace of a Baptist has been found for more than a half century after its settlement in 1607. So stringent were the laws designed to repress dissent and foster the Established Church that no sign of nonconformity appeared. It was in New England that the first Baptist churches in the New World were organized. And this was not because Puritans in New England were more tolerant than Cavaliers in Virginia. The fact is that the Puritans of New England, having founded a commonwealth in which they might enjoy religious freedom, sought to prevent the intrusion of all who differed from themselves in religion, and for a hundred years did all in their power by employing fines, cruel whippings, imprisonment and death to keep their communities free from those whose religious views differed from their own. Their persecutions were so cruel as to call forth remonstrance from their Congregational brethren in England, one of whom wrote to a New England Puritan in 1670: "Oh, how it grieves me that New England should persecute! . . . We blush and are filled with shame and confusion of face, when we hear of these things." These persecutions also called forth the rebuke of King Charles the Second, who, though he was unable to restrain the dominant sect in England from maltreating Dissenters, could not understand why in the wide freedom of the New World religious animosities should find any place, and was horrified to hear of the relentless cruelties with which the Puritans of New England were seeking to extirpate the Baptists, declaring that it was "a severity the more to be wondered at, whereas liberty of conscience was made a principal motive for your first transportation thither." But for a full half century longer the persecutions continued, while many of the most prominent ministers played upon the fears of the people and made them more violent by representing that the wrath of God was being manifested against New England in Indian wars and storms and pestilence because Quakers and Baptists were not exterminated.[1] Though the grosser forms of persecution ceased early in the eighteenth century, the taking of the property of Baptists by distraint continued in Massachusetts till well into the nineteenth century.

One of the first instances of persecution in Massachusetts was the banishment of Roger Williams in 1636. He proceeded to what is now the State of Rhode Island, where, to use his own words, "Having made covenant of peaceful neighborhood with all the sachems and natives round about us, and having in a sense of God's merciful providence to me in my distress, called the place Providence, I desired that it might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience." Here he established the first civil government in the world which, having the power to refuse, yet granted full liberty of conscience in matters of religion. And here in March, 1639, under the leadership of Williams, was organized the first Baptist church in America. Williams was baptized by Ezekiel Holliman, after which Williams baptized both Holliman and the eleven other constituent members of the little church. Baptist historians are generally agreed that the mode of baptism used was immersion.[2]

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[1] These are almost the exact words of Pastor Wilson of Boston and Increase Mather. The story of these persecutions is told in detail by Backus, and some of them are retold by Newman, *Baptist Churches in the United States,* Period I, Chapters 1-6. Newman makes a lame apology for the persecutors, saying, p. 78, "at the same time this view of the matter forbids that we should censure too severely the Massachusetts authorities for seeking to preserve the ecclesiastical and civil order to establish which they left England, and which they supposed would be jeopardized by the toleration of such teachings as those of Williams before his banishment, or those of the Baptists and Quakers, which they thoroughly misunderstood, and which they honestly thought to be fraught with great dangers to the commonwealth." In other places Newman makes like apologies for the persecuting New Englanders, saying that they feared that toleration by them of Baptists might cause the English sovereign to annul their charter. Certainly this last reason could not have been valid after the assembling of the Long Parliament in 1640, when the power of Charles the First to annul charters was ended forever. The cruel whipping of Obadiah Holmes at Lynn, Mass., in 1651, produced only a feeling of horror when it was told in England, but it was complacently defended by John Cotton. A few years later these same Massachusetts persecutors were hanging women for being Quakers, and were threatening Rhode Island with boycott because that State would not employ equally cruel measures against the hated sect.

After four months Williams withdrew from the church which he had organized, and became and remained all his life what was known as a Seeker in matters of religion. Just as John Smyth had done a quarter of a century before at Amsterdam, he began to doubt the validity of his baptism on the ground that there had not been a proper administrator, one who had the right by apostolic succession. He believed that the succession had been broken and that no proper administrator existed, and he looked for the restoration of ordinances and administrators by express divine command. Until the divine will should be manifested he would remain a seeker. But during the remaining forty years of his life he was a strong friend of the Baptists and wrote in defense of Baptist principles even as late as 1676.

The first Baptist Church of Providence seems to have been of a nondescript kind, neither wholly General nor wholly Particular. It had no regular meeting place, assembling in private houses or out of doors. Probably it had several pastors at the same time, none of whom had been specially ordained. Williams himself was a Calvinist, and such very likely were those whom he baptized into his church membership. But even among the constituent members were some who had been baptized in England and others already baptized came later. These new arrivals were Arminians. Soon Arminians became a majority in the little church, and a sharp division was found among the members. But the question which divided them was not Calvinism or Arminianism, but the doctrine of the laying on of hands. Williams had regarded it as an indispensable part of Christian doctrine, and thought that it should immediately follow baptism and be a prerequisite to admission to the Lord's Supper. Many early Baptists declared that the "first principles of Christ" were six in number and they found them all in the first two verses of the sixth chapter of Hebrews. They were: (1) Repentance from dead works; (2) Faith towards God; (3) The doctrine of Baptism; (4) The laying on of hands; (5) Resurrection of the dead; (6) Eternal judgment. Those who held all those views became known about this time as Six Principle Baptists. For many years the General Baptists seem all to have been such, and such today are their successors who have not been assimilated with the Regular Baptists. But the question first became a matter of controversy in the Providence Church and in 1652 it caused a split in the little body. One party followed Thomas Olney in rejecting the doctrine of laying on of hands. After keeping up an organization for a few years they disbanded. The second group following the lead of William Wikenden, Chad Brown, and Gregory Dexter, three men of much ability, increased in numbers and strength. Their church continues to this day as the First Baptist Church of Providence, but it is now a regular Baptist church.

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[2] Newman says that Williams was immersed, but says further that "the introduction of immersion by Williams was three years in advance of its introduction by the Baptists of England." To this strait Newman is led by following Whitsett, who fixes the year 1641 for the introduction of immersion among the Baptists of England. I have tried to show above why I cannot accept this conclusion of Whitsett. Newman, however, does not accept the view which Whitsett sets forth in the Appendix to his volume, *A Question in Baptist History,* that Roger Williams was not baptized by immersion, and that this practice was brought to the Rhode Island Baptists by Mr. Lucar, "who had been immersed in 1641, when Blunt brought back the rite from Holland, and who may have come to Rhode Island when Williams returned with the charter in 1644." One wonders why Whitsett should have disregarded the fact that as early as 1640 President Dunster of Harvard College made public declaration of his preference for immersion as the mode of baptism. I consider the evidence that Williams was baptized by immersion beyond dispute. As in the case of Smyth the convincing consideration is that the uniform tradition is that the mode was immersion. Had any change been made after the organization of the church, in all probability there would have been some record of it. And if any admit that Williams was baptized by immersion it is hard to see how they can deny that the General Baptists were already using immersion before the Particular Baptists organized their first church in 1641, for in organizing a Baptist church it is probable that Williams used the mode of baptism that the English Baptists were already using. There is evidence that Williams was acquainted with the tracts on liberty of conscience issued by the General Baptists a few years earlier.

The second Baptist Church organized in the New World was also in Rhode Island, at Newport. Its pastor was John Clarke, whom Newman describes as "a Baptist of the purest type, the most important American Baptist of the century in which he lived." Coming from England in 1637, early the next year he made his way to Rhode Island, where he was kindly received by Williams. He settled at Newport where he served a group of colonists as physician and minister. As early as 1644, possibly as early as 1641 or 1642, he organized there a Baptist Church. This church was of the Particular Baptist type. Among its first members was Mark Lukar who had come from an English church of that faith. Clarke died in 1676 and was succeeded by Obadiah Holmes who, in 1651, had been so cruelly whipped for preaching the gospel at Lynn, Massachusetts. In 1725 John Comer became pastor. He soon became unsettled about the doctrine of the laying on of hands and for a while associated with the General Baptists. He is of special interest and importance in Baptist history because of the diary he kept. In it he mentions the fact that Paul Palmer had written to him in 1729 that two years before he had established a Baptist church in North Carolina. He also tells of the "Yearly Association" of the General Baptists which met in 1729 at Newport, at which there were present 32 delegates of whom eight were ministers and three deacons, representing 13 distinct bodies in Rhode Island, Long Island, Connecticut, and New York,—making "the largest Convention that hath ever been," seeming to imply that there had been previous meetings of the kind. He also says that there were three Particular Baptist churches in New England, one at Newport, another at Swansea, and another at Boston; and two Seventh Day Baptist churches, one at Wellesley and one at Newport;

a total of eighteen Baptist churches of all kinds in that territory about the time the first Baptist church was founded in North Carolina.

Outside of New England the Baptists in the seventeenth century had their greatest and freest development in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Charter granted in 1681 to William Penn, like all the colonial charters granted by Charles the Second, guaranteed full religious liberty. About the time of the founding of the Pennsylvania colony New Jersey also came under the control of the Quakers. To these colonies flocked the persecuted Dissenters of England and Wales, as well as many French, Germans, Swedes, Finns, and Scotch-Irish. In three years the population had reached 7,200. The first Baptist church was established in Pennsylvania in 1684; a second at Pennepek in 1688; one at Piscataqua, New Jersey, in 1689; another at Middleton, N. J., and another at Cohansey, N. J., about the same time. The First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, beginning as a mission of the Pennepek church in 1687, became independent in 1698. In 1703 a Baptist church of Pembrokeshire, Wales, came, pastor and all, to Welsh Tract on the Delaware. This church, according to Morgan Edwards, as quoted by Newman, "was the principal if not the sole means of introducing singing, imposition of hands, church covenant, etc., among the Baptists of the Middle States."

The Philadelphia Association had its first recorded meeting in 1707. It embraced all the nine churches of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. As it was the oldest, so it has been the most influential Association of Baptists in the New World. From the beginning it had as leaders and ministers of its churches men of culture and education, who guided them wisely, instructed their members in Christian doctrine, helped them to avoid errors, and secured harmony and union. In general they followed the Baptist Confession of 1689, which they modified in 1743, making what is called the Philadelphia Confession. They also sent out missionaries to other colonies to secure acceptance of their principles and as we shall see later, were to have a large part in our North Carolina Baptist affairs. In this they were only assuming a leadership to which their advantages had entitled them, and for which they were responsible. A statement from Newman will show what these advantages were:

> All the conditions were present in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys for the development of strong well-ordered Baptist churches. Religious liberty relieved Baptists of the necessity of being always on the defensive and spending their strength in the effort to exist. There was no overshadowing and domineering church party to cause them to be looked down upon as sectaries and intruders and to look upon themselves as martyrs and aliens. While the Quakers were numerous and in many cases wealthy, they were for the most part free from arrogance and intolerance, and Baptists were able to be and feel themselves citizens in the fullest sense.[3]

The first Baptist church in South Carolina was a refugee church from Kittery, now in the bounds of the State of Maine, which driven by persecution came with their pastor, William Screven, to Charleston in 1684. This little group of Baptists found other Baptists already in the Province, some of them men and women of high social standing and of political influence. These they united with themselves. As early as 1700 these South Carolina Baptists adopted the Confession of 1689. Soon they were the most numerous and influential body of Christians in the Province.

To this point I have tried to trace the development of the Baptists in sufficient detail to show the conditions out of which the North Carolina Baptists arose.

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[3] Newman, *Hist. of the Baptist Churches in the United States,* p. 210.

## V

# RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CHARACTER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COLONISTS

The history of the Baptists of North Carolina begins with the first settlement, nearly three-quarters of a century before the establishment of the first permanent Baptist Church at Shiloh. The influences and events of this period largely determined the character of the inhabitants, political, social and religious. Hence if we would understand the peculiar traits of the Baptists of North Carolina we must first learn something of the conditions among which they had their origin and development—why the early settlers came to North Carolina and what was the geographical, social and political environment of their lives.

North Carolina is a part of that great domain which Charles the Second of England, in 1663, granted to eight of his courtiers, known in Carolina history as Lords Proprietors. Charles himself was dissolute almost beyond any other man who ever sat on the throne of England, and it is no pleasant reflection that to him our State owes its beautiful name. Several of the Lords Proprietors were of like character with the king, and hardly one of them had ever manifested more than a prudential interest in religion. But in making their petition to the king, they begged for the grant of territory under the pretense of "a pious zeal for the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen." The story is told that, as these irreligious courtiers stood before the king with this pious claptrap, the "Merrie

Monarch" looked each in the face a moment and then burst into loud peals of laughter, in which his audience joined heartily. Then, taking up a little shaggy spaniel with large, meek eyes, and holding it at arm's length before him, he said, "Good friends, here is a model of piety and sincerity, which it might be wholesome for you to copy." And tossing the dog to one of the courtiers, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, he continued, "There, Hyde, is a worthy prelate; make him archbishop of the domain which I shall give you." And with bitter irony Charles caused to be inserted in the preamble of the Charter of 1663 a phrase telling how the Lords Proprietors were "excited by a laudable and pious zeal for the propagation of the Christian faith." Their subsequent actions showed that Charles correctly estimated their religious interest in their colony. Article three of the charter gives to the Proprietors control of the patronage and advowsons of such churches as may be thereafter erected, "together with the power to build and found churches." But there is no evidence that any of the original Proprietors ever sought to exercise this right. For nearly forty years the colonists were left to their own initiative in matters of religion, and when finally in 1701 a governor sought to promote the establishment of the Church of England in the Province it was not on the motion of the Proprietors but of Dr. Thomas Bray representing the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. For the remainder of the Proprietary period, which closed in 1729, this Society strove, under adverse conditions which I shall discuss later, to keep a missionary in the Albemarle to preach and to baptize the children of the colonists, but in 1729, when the Proprietors relinquished their claim, Governor Everard reported that there was not a single minister of the Church of England in North Carolina.

There can, however, be no doubt that the Lords Proprietors desired that their province of Carolina should be a land of religious freedom. Under the terms of their charter they had Palatine rights, which virtually amounted to the right to establish a kingdom and govern it as they would in the wilds of the New World. They were to be "the true and absolute Lords Proprietors of the country," the only restriction being that they should always recognize the sovereignty of the king of England and not violate the rights of the subjects of the English nation, if any should already be settled in the new domain. For all this they were to pay a yearly rental of twenty marks, about two hundred dollars, and give the king one-fourth of all the metals mined in the limits of their territory.

In matters of religion, since the Lords Proprietors desired that their colonists should have privileges not granted to the people of England, they were careful to have the charter explicit. Article eighteen of this instrument authorizes them to grant liberty of conscience and of worship to Dissenters, those who "cannot, in their private opinions, conform to the public exercises of religion, according to the liturgy, form and ceremonies of the Church of England, or take and subscribe the oaths and articles, made and established in that behalf." The purpose of this provision about the oath was doubtless to avoid trouble with the Quakers.

For many years, in fact, nearly as long as they held the Province, the Lords Proprietors sought to recommend Carolina by a guarantee of religious freedom. On June 10, 1663, John Colleton, one of the Proprietors, writing to another Proprietor, the Duke of Albemarle, said that persons who were designing to go to Carolina "expect liberty of conscience, and without this will not go."[1] He further said that they wanted to be assured that the charter of the Lords Proprietors would not fail them in this. And seemingly realizing that it was among Dissenters alone that they could hope to find colonists, the Lords Proprietors made haste to reiterate and strengthen their promises.

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[1] *Colonial Records,* I, 34.

On August of this year, 1663, they made a further declaration, with the specific purpose of attracting settlers to the Cape Fear settlement, saying, "We will grant, in as ample manner as the inhabitants shall desire, freedom and liberty of conscience in all religious and spiritual things, and to be kept inviolably with them, we having power in the charter to do so."[2] In the second or revised charter of 1665 the guarantees of religious freedom are as explicit as language can make them. They are as follows:

> No person or persons to whome such liberty shall be given, shall be in any way molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion, or practice in matters of religious concernments, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of the province, county or colony, that they make their abode in: but all and every such person or persons may, from time to time, and at all times, freely and quietly have and enjoy his and their judgments and consciences, in matters of religion, throughout all the said province or colony, they behaving themselves peaceably, and not using this liberty to licentiousness, nor to civil injury, or outward disturbance of others; any law, statute or clause, contained or to be contained, usage or custom of our realm of England, to the contrary hereof, in any wise notwithstanding.

And by agents and pamphlets this attraction of Carolina as a land of religious freedom was kept before the people of England. As late as 1709 Lawson mentions it in his *History of North Carolina*,[3] many parts of which seem designed to advertise the advantages of the Province. The following from a pamphlet of 1666 will illustrate the method of this advertising:

> If therefore any industrious and ingenious persons shall be willing to partake of the felicities of this country, let them em-

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[2] *Colonial Records*, I, 45.
[3] Page 274 of the reprint of 1860.

> brace the first opportunity, that they may obtain the greater advantages.
>
> *The chief of the privileges are as follows:*
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> First, there shall be full liberty of conscience granted to all, so that no man is to be molested or called in question for matters of religious concern; but every one is to be obedient to the civil government, worshiping God after their own way.[4]

Without doubt the Proprietors were led to make this parade of Carolina as a land of religious freedom because of the merciless persecutions of Dissenters both in England and in New England and Virginia from the early years of the Restoration. This persecution was partly without sanction of law, and was the result of the reaction that came to the sore restrictions which the Puritans in their few years of power, which ended with the Restoration in 1660, had put upon pleasures and sports of the English people. For the Puritans had hewn down maypoles, dismantled theatres, forbidden rope-dancing, puppet-shows, horse-racing, and bear-baiting, then a very popular sport, but which the "Puritan hated, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." (Macaulay.) These same Puritans had also driven some divines of the Established Church from their benefices because they could not conform to the Calvinistic mode of worship, brutally defaced churches and sepulchres, and mutilated works of art generally. Hence the typical Puritan, with "the sad colored dress, the sour look, the straight hair, the nasal whine, the speech interspersed with quaint texts, the abhorrence of comedies, cars, and hawking," (Macaulay), came to be abhorred. When his day of power was over the people were ready for requital and they classed with the hated Puritans all Dissenters, but especially such as were distinguished by some peculiarity of doctrine as the Quakers and the Baptists. Against them they were ready to use methods of cruelty far beyond the license of law.

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[4] Pamphlet, Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, 37ff.

But laws were not long wanting. Soon Parliament passed three Acts cunningly designed for the extermination of dissent and Dissenters in England. The first was the Uniformity Act, which received the royal assent on May 19, 1662. Under its terms all ministers were ejected from their benefices who would not declare their assent to the articles of the Church of England and to everything contained in the Prayer Book, and subscribe to an oath that it was not lawful under any pretense whatever to take up arms against the king. In the enforcement of this act some two thousand ministers, many of them described as "eminently godly, learned, and useful," were ejected from their benefices.[5] The second act, known as the Conventicle Act, passed in 1664, forbade under severe penalties any minister to officiate at, or any one to attend, a religious service not conducted after the liturgy of the Church of England, and the third, the Five Mile Act, passed in 1665, forbade a dissenting minister to live within five miles of an incorporated town.[6]

Among all the victims of the enforcement of these laws the members of no other sect, except the Quakers, suffered more severely than the Baptists. The pages of Crosby's second volume of the *History of the English Baptists* are made up of almost nothing else than accounts of the mob violence and legal persecutions to which Baptists, both ministers and laymen, were subjected at this period. Not only John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress,* for twelve years, "languished in a dungeon for the crime of preaching the gospel to the poor," (Macaulay), but imprisonment for the same offense was the lot of Hanserd Knollys, Vavasor Powel, Mr. Jessey, John Griffith, Thomas Grantham, and John James, nearly every one of them men of culture and educated at a University, and many other Baptist ministers of lesser fame. Nor did laymen escape; they were "hall'd from their peaceable habitations and thrust into prisons, almost in all counties in England." Before justices especially fired with persecuting zeal were brought "men and women by sevens," and committed to prisons, where through many months they were made to share the same cell with the most violent and degraded criminals, or left to starve and die of neglect. At Ailsbury in Buckinghamshire ten men and two women were condemned to death for persisting in their Baptist worship, and were saved from execution only by petition to the king, which petition was presented and seconded by Edward Hyde, one of the Lords Proprietors, who was at the time Chancellor.

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[5] Ivemy, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. I, 328.

[6] "The Act of Uniformity had ejected him, in spite of royal promises, from a benefice which was his freehold, and had reduced him to beggary and dependence. The Five Mile Act had banished him from his dwelling, from his relations, from his friends, from all places of public resort. Under the Conventicle Act his goods had been distrained; and he had been flung into one noisome gaol after another among highwaymen and housebreakers. Out of prison he had constantly had the officers of justice on his track; he had been forced to pay hush money to informers; he had stolen, in ignominious disguises, through windows and trapdoors, to meet his flock, and had, while pouring the baptismal water, or distributing the eucharistic bread, been anxiously waiting for the signal that the tipstaves were approaching." Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter VII.

But if persecution was bad in England it was bad also in New England and Virginia, in which parts of America and Maryland alone English colonies were to be found in 1660. We have seen that before this time, the Puritans of Massachusetts were most inhumanely punishing Baptist preachers like Obadiah Holmes with the lash. Holmes was publicly whipped in 1651. Eight years later, after seeking in vain to rid their colonies of Quakers by such means as fines and imprisonment, and cruel whippings and cutting off their ears, the court at Boston condemned to death and brought to execution two Quaker men and one Quaker woman, the men being hanged on October 27, 1659, the woman on June 1, 1660.[7]

There was one New England colony in which at this time even the persecuted Quaker could find secure refuge. This was Rhode Island. It was in vain that the other New England Colonies sought to cause Rhode Island to unite with them in the persecutions, in vain they resorted to intimidation and threats, that they would cut off Rhode Island from social and business intercourse with her neighbors, and that Boston ships would no longer carry the Rhode Island commerce. Although Fox's views were strongly disapproved in open debate by Roger Williams, and although the Massachusetts persecutors could truthfully say that some of the Quaker women had violated all sense of decency, one by walking naked through the town of Salem, and another by going unclad into a meeting house in Newbury in time of public worship, still the people of Rhode Island could not be induced by either threats or entreaties to deny shelter to the refugees. In Newport the Quakers could still find a haven, though they returned from Boston "with many a four scar on their bodies," the wales of the whip cord on their back, the festering sore by the side of the head from which the ear had been brutally torn, or the ugly livid brand of the red hot iron on the cheek. Here they had liberty, and were entertained in the houses of the citizens until such time as they should again feel the promptings of the spirit to sally forth at the risk of receiving like punishment again.[8]

Virginia, on the other hand, gave a reception to the emissaries of Massachusetts, who were persecuting the Quakers even to strange cities, far different from the reception given them in Rhode Island. At the instigation of the Puritan ministers and officials the Virginia authorities arrested two Quaker women who were preaching in Virginia and after inflicting upon them the most barbarous punishment of the lash, robbed them of their goods, and banished them from the province.[9]

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[7] Backus, *History of the Baptists of New England,* Vol. I, 304, 331.

[8] I have got the facts for this paragraph from the first volume of Backus' *History of New England.*

As New England was the stronghold of Puritanism in America, so Virginia was the stronghold of the Established Church, and was so known in both England and America. The pages of Hawks' *Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* well attest the fact that from the first until a period much later than the first settlement in North Carolina Dissenters were not tolerated in Virginia. By an act of the first legislature, in 1619, the Church of England was established; the legislature of 1624 made several laws for the Church's improvement; in 1629 an act was passed, enjoining under severe penalties a strict conformity to the canons of the Church; in the years 1639 to 1642 several laws were passed against the Puritans not because there were any in Virginia at the time, "but to prevent the infection from reaching this country"; in 1642 Puritan missionaries from Massachusetts had been silenced by act of the legislature; and since an Indian massacre followed in Virginia soon afterwards Governor Winthrop, the pious persecutor of Puritan Massachusetts, regarded it as a special judgment of Heaven; during the period of the Protectorate of Cromwell, 1653 and the years immediately following, the influence of the Church of England remained strong in Virginia. Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor, made a show of resistance to the navy of the Protector. Cromwell seems to have regarded Virginia with suspicion. Here the Cavaliers, driven from home, found an asylum and sympathy. According to an account credited by many historians, on the death of Governor Matthews in 1659 Sir William Berkeley again assumed the administration and proclaimed Charles the Second king, sixteen months before the Restoration in England. Certain it is that on the accession of Charles the Second a commission as governor was immediately sent to Berkeley, who being invited to England, perfected plans there for strengthening the Church of England in the Province, which plans were embodied in laws by the legislature in 1661 and 1662. The evident purpose of these laws was to make every one either conform to the worship of the Church of England or leave the Province. For many years there had been light fines for those who absented themselves from attendance on the services of the Church. The legislature at this time continued these light fines for their own members, but "Quakers and other recusants, who, out of non-conformity to the church" absented themselves were to pay for each month's absence twenty pounds sterling.[10]

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[9] Hawks, in his *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, 361ff., is severe in his censure of the Massachusetts authorities for following the fugitive Quakers to Virginia and inducing the Virginia authorites to join with them in the unholy work. But he has little condemnation for the Virginians who lent themselves to the purposes of their New England tempters. He only says that whether the cruel treatment of the Quaker women came from Puritan or Prelate it was *damnable wickedness.* In any event, it is, as Hawks says, enough to make the blood boil to read in the pages of Bishop of two respectable women, refugees from persecution in Massachusetts coming to Virginia, only to receive there "thirty-two stripes apiece, with a nine-corded whip, three knots in each cord—being drawn to the pillory in such an uncivil manner as is not fit to be rehearsed, with a running knot about their hands—the very first lash of which drew the blood and made it run down in abundance from their breasts." Hawks is quoting from Bishop, *New England Judged,* 2nd part, p. 120. London, 1667.

And doubtless with the intention of making the application of the law to "other recusants" as well as to Quakers, the following notorious act was passed:

> Whereas, many schismatical persons, out of their averseness to the orthodox established religion, or out of the new fangled conceit of their own heretical inventions, do refuse to have their

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[10] Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* Vol. I, 67f.

> children baptized; Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all persons who in contempt of the divine sacrament of Baptism, shall refuse when he may carry their child to a lawful minister of that county to have them baptized, shall be amerced two thousand pounds of tobacco; half to the informer; half to the public."[11]

At this time also four of a company of Cromwell's veterans, who for some years had been settled in the colony, and who in religion were Independents, were arrested and put to death. It is generally supposed that their chief offense was non-conformity in religion.

The following summary of the religious conditions in Virginia at the time of the first settlements in North Carolina is taken from the work of a careful and accurate historian.[12] He says:

> The facts now before us show that, by the laws of the colony, any persons daring to teach the people doctrines or practices, other than those prescribed by the Church of England, were to be imprisoned until they should be reclaimed, or if they could not be reclaimed, sent to England for punishment; that every person in the colony, male and female, was obliged when called upon to go to the minister, and give a true statement of his or her faith; to attend the Episcopal service every Sabbath day; and to be present, and answer publicly, whenever the minister should catechize"; that no minister not conformed to the Church of England, should, under the severest penalties, be permitted to teach or to preach, publicly or privately; that every colonist should pay his assessed proportion of the taxes for the support of the Episcopal Church; that no catechism should be taught but that contained in the book of Common Prayer; that any person not conforming to the Church, absence from the services of which was to be the proof, was to pay a fine of a hundred dollars a month, and if not reclaimed within twelve months, was to be imprisoned until he did conform, and give the Church security that he would maintain his conformity; and every one was compelled by fines to have his children baptized. These and similar laws, the Governor, the Council of State, and the Ministers of religion, all ready enough to it, were enjoined to execute; and to make the

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[11] Henning's Statutes.

[12] Dr. Robert Boyle C. Howell, *The Early Baptists in Virginia,* p. 47.

punishment sure, informers were suborned by the payment to them of half the fines imposed upon offenders.[13]

In view of the conditions outlined in the last few pages it becomes evident that the Lords Proprietors were making a wide departure from the spirit of their time in offering absolute religious freedom to settlers in their province of Carolina. Dissenters were being persecuted under the forms of law in England and Wales; they were being persecuted with fines, imprisonment, mutilation and death in New England and with everything short of death in Virginia. Only in Rhode Island was there complete religious freedom, and the territory of this colony was too limited to attract immigrants. Maryland, with a limited religious freedom, was also small. But in the magnificent domain of Carolina, embracing practically all the territory east of the Mississippi River, and south of Virginia, except Florida, every one was to have the right to freedom of conscience and liberty to choose his own religion and form of worship unmolested by the State. This was to be a government where the preacher might preach with Episcopal ordination or without it, use the liturgy of the Church of England or use no liturgy except one of his own, baptize his children or let them go unbaptized, contend for the baptism of believers alone or contend that baptism is no longer to be administered, celebrate the Lord's Supper every week or regard it as no longer a necessary ordinance, be Episcopalian, Catholic, Quaker, Independent, Puritan, Mennonite, attend church services or not attend them. So long as one's religion did not disturb the well-being of society one was free to believe and worship and do as he pleased. This was the plan of the Lords Proprietors. All their subsequent acts with reference to the Province sufficiently attest the fact that they were sincere in their purpose to create and develop a great, populous and powerful colony in which there should be religious freedom. Their conception was much more enlightened and more liberal than had hitherto been attained except by Roger Williams and his colony of Rhode Island. The original Proprietors were faithful during their lifetime to see that there was no infringement on the freedom thus promised. Nearly forty years had elapsed when the first effort was made to establish a church by law. Then, as we shall see, the principle of religious freedom was too well established in North Carolina for a state church to prosper. The Province had not yet become the great and populous state which the Proprietors hoped for, but the ideals of religious freedom were already so firmly planted that no violence could eradicate them, and in a few decades they were destined to bear fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.

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[13] That this statement of Dr. Howell though impassioned in tone is not too severe may be seen by any one who will consult his book and note the authorities he cites. The reader will find practically the same facts in Hawks, though often with extenuating considerations.

We now turn to consider the results of the constant appeal made for colonists by the Lords Proprietors. In the New World and in the Old agents of the Proprietors were busy soliciting men and women to go to Carolina. The various attractions of the new land were advertised in pamphlets, which seemed especially designed to induce Dissenters to go to the colony, since the promise of religious freedom was always emphasized as the first advantage of the colonist. The question is whether this appeal brought Dissenters in large numbers, or relatively large numbers, to the province from England and from the English colonies in America.

When the Lords Proprietors got their charter in 1663 there were already possibly a thousand settlers in that part of North Carolina known as the Albemarle, the first settlements being in Perquimans and the neighboring territory. By 1676 the population had increased to fourteen hundred taxables, indicating a population of about three thousand.

By the end of the century the population was still less than five thousand. The greater part of these were in the Albemarle, though as early as 1691 a small number of French Huguenots had come from Virginia and settled on the Pamlico, and there were scattering English settlers south of the Albemarle. In 1716 the population was still under ten thousand; in 1730, shortly after the first Baptist church was established, it had reached thirty thousand.

As to the religious connections and beliefs of those who first came into the region of the Albemarle in the decade before the Lords Proprietors obtained their patent we have no documentary evidence. In 1653 Roger Green of Nansemond County, Virginia, obtained a grant from the Virginia authorities for ten thousand acres of land for the first one hundred who should settle on the Roanoke River and the south side of the Chowan River, while Green himself should be rewarded for seating those settlers with one thousand acres of land next to theirs. While tradition says that Green was a Presbyterian, there is no evidence that Green ever located his settlers.[14] But there is no doubt that settlers in a continuous stream were coming into the Albemarle from the year 1659. In 1662 George Durant bought from the Indian chief Kilcocanen land on the Perquimans River still known as Durant's Neck. Soon he was followed by "other substantial planters from Virginia and other plantations"[15] who also got the titles to their lands from the Indians. "Substantial planters" in those days usually had a number of indentured white servants who worked their lands for them. It is probable that at this time there came also many small farmers some of whom had been indentured servants but who after their terms of service were ended had married and were seeking new homes. Tradition says that most of the colonists who came at this time were Dissenters, who supposed, falsely indeed, that they were getting beyond the jurisdiction of the State of Virginia.[16]

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[14] Modern writers on North Carolina history point out that the name "Clarke" (clerk) by which Green is designated in the Act of the Virginia legislature indicates that he was a clergyman. But that by no means indicates that he was a member of the Church of England. In 1653 Virginia was under the rule of the Protectorate whose state church included Presbyterians as well as Episcopalians, while for the previous period since 1643 the establishment in England had been Presbyterian.

[15] Lawson, *History of North Carolina.* Reprint of 1860, p. 109.

And Dissenters probably were by far the greater number of those who came from Virginia to this colony during the Proprietary period. They came for the most part from Nansemond County, Virginia, which had "long abounded in Non-Conformists," and in which even at this time the persecuted Quakers sought a place of retreat.[17] Bancroft says that "at this period, men who were impatient of interference, who dreaded the enforcement of religious conformity, who distrusted the spirit of the new government in Virginia, plunged more deeply into the forests."[18] It is against reason to suppose the Dissenters of Virginia who had assembled in Nansemond, then the frontier county of Virginia to the south, were not among the first to avail themselves of an asylum on the waters of the Chowan and the Sound from the persecution to which the severity of the Virginia laws on religion exposed them. At a time when, as a contemporaneous historian[19] records, great restraints under severe penalties, to prevent their increase, were laid upon "divers sectaries in religion beginning to spread themselves there," it is preposterous to suppose that many of these Dissenters did not leave Virginia and seek homes in the region to the south beyond the reach, as they supposed, of the Virginia laws, precisely because they desired to escape persecution. It is not necessary to suppose that these Quakers and other Dissenters who were present in such numbers as to alarm the religionists of Virginia were organized into churches. In fact, except the independent congregation of Cromwell's veterans which was dispersed by the execution of four of its members on a charge not yet made clear, the numerous Dissenters of Virginia at this time seem to have been unorganized. They had no churches, no pastors. As late as 1672 George Fox found only one organized Quaker meeting in Virginia, that four miles south of "Nancemund Water," but he found many Quakers. Furthermore it can hardly be considered improbable that many Virginia colonists were ready at this time to seek a land of religious freedom, not because they had subjected themselves to persecution by openly severing their connection with the state church, but because they were irked by a forced conformity to the Church Laws and viewed with disgust the severe persecution to which Dissenters were subjected.

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[16] With reference to the character of these first inhabitants Williamson, *History of North Carolina*, Vol. I, 92f., says "as the first settlers on the waters of the Weapomioc, now called Albemarle Sound, were chiefly refugees from religious oppression, they had no claims on government; nor did they wish to draw its attention. They regarded the Indian natives as the true lords of the soil; treated with them in that capacity; purchased their lands, and obtained their grants. The number of these people, in the process of time, had drawn the attention of the government; and Sir William Berkeley, the governor of Virginia, in the year 1661, was instructed to give them other titles to those lands, causing them to hold under the Crown."

[17] Fox, *Journal*, speaks of finding Quakers in Nansemond in 1672. His language would indicate that they were numerous.

[18] Bancroft, *History of U. S.*, Vol. II, 134. Bancroft cites Winthrop, II, 334, and Johnson, *Wonders. Prov. B.*, III, C. XI, as authorities for his statement that Non-conformists at this time were numerous in Nansemond.

[19] Berkeley, quoted in Burk, *Hist. of Virginia*, II, 155.

What I have said above with reference to the first settlers in the present region of the Albemarle applies with even greater force to those who came from Virginia to that region after the establishment of the Proprietary government in 1664. The fame of the Albemarle Colony and its government soon spread abroad. Its governor, William Drummond, was a Scotchman, prudent, popular, and imbued with a passion for liberty;[20] in accord with the instructions from the Proprietors he instituted a simple form of government, with a legislature at first consisting of the assembled freeholders and later of such representatives as they saw fit to elect; he furnished the colonists lands, fifty acres for every person in a family, free of charge except a small annual quit-rent; and, according to Bancroft, "he left the infant people to take care of themselves; to enjoy liberty of conscience and of conduct in the entire freedom of innocent retirement; to forget the world, till rent-day drew near, and quit-rents might be demanded. Such was the origin of fixed settlements in North Carolina. The child of ecclesiastical oppression was swathed in independence." The appeal of such a region of freedom could not have been unheard by those who were persecuted for conscience' sake in Virginia and New England.

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[20] Bancroft, *History of the United States,* II, 136, and sources there cited.

We now turn to consider what effect the promise of religious freedom in Carolina had in inducing Dissenters to flee from the persecutions in the mother country under Charles the Second. That the persecuted and outlawed dissenting ministers and people of England did not go in swarms to the new land of freedom and plenty so well advertised by the Proprietors may seem to us surprising, as it doubtless did to the Lords Proprietors themselves. But on closer consideration we can see several reasons for their remaining at home. Persecution had at that time become a chronic condition with the English Dissenters. To go to the New World might be only to exchange bad conditions for worse; many regarded with great abhorrence the breaking of home ties and making their home beyond a stormy ocean which must be crossed in weak ships in a voyage of several months. And if they had been willing, in the case of the average family, the cost, about thirty dollars for each person, was prohibitive. Besides, the alluring picture of Carolina as a land of opportunity and luxury was offset by another which painted the lands of the New World generally as a wilderness of thickets and forests, the lair of such dangerous wild beasts as lions, tigers, and cougars,[21] infested by the deadly rattlesnake and copperhead, and the home of fierce savages who broke on unsuspecting settlers in the dead of night, and, after murdering them and burning their dwellings, departed dangling their bloody scalps. But most dangerous of all was the climate. By this time the people of England must have known well of the great mortality of their young men who went to Virginia. It was literally at the peril of their lives that the colonists for the first half century after the settlement in 1607 went to Virginia. Here they were subject to unending epidemics of malaria and not seldom to yellow fever and the plague. Governor Berkeley is authority for the statement that during these years "not one in five escaped the first year." Although this is doubtless an exaggeration, the number who died before they became "seasoned" is horrible to contemplate even now.[22] It need cause no surprise that many English Dissenters preferred a heartless persecution at home to the perils of the New World. And that the perils were well known and greatly dreaded may be inferred from the fact that the severest and final penalty for violation of the Conventicle Act was "banishment for seven years to some American colony."

But evidence is not wanting that in England some of the Dissenters were induced to migrate to Carolina. In the year 1708, was published a *History of the British Empire in America*. A portion of this work was the *History of Carolina* by J. Oldmixon, a reprint of which is found in the second volume of the *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, from which I copy the following paragraph:

> The Proprietaries, after they had got their charter, gave due encouragement for persons to settle in this Province, and there

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[21] Lawson and Brickell both list lions and tigers among the animals of Carolina, while the latter gives pictures of them.

[22] See the account in Wertenbaker, *Colonial Virginia,* Chapter III.

> being express provision made in it for a toleration, and indulgence to all Christians in the free exercise of their religion, great numbers of Protestants, dissenters from the Church of England, retired thither.

The words here quoted refer to the whole province, North as well as South Carolina, while Mr. Oldmixon makes other statements, which are to be applied to the southern colony alone, telling of the great number of Dissenters who left England at this time in search of religious freedom.[23] He says that at this time, 1682-1685, many Dissenters, some of them men of good estates, and many other persons went to Carolina in hopes of mending their fortunes. These were led by Humphrey Blake, the brother of the renowned Admiral Blake, who freely used his means to transport a large company of Dissenters to Carolina, since he believed that the persecutions which they were then enduring would be succeeded even by worse persecutions when the Catholic James should become king. In this company was a nephew of the Admiral, Joseph Blake, whose wife and mother-in-law were Baptists.[24] And there is other evidence that the promise of religious freedom in Carolina stirred the Dissenters of England. In March, 1706, only forty years after the signing of the Charter, seventeen citizens of South Carolina presented a petition to the House of Lords in which they stated that the greatest part of the inhabitants of South Carolina were Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England, who had been induced to leave their native country by hope of enjoying religious liberty,[25] while Oldmixon says that the Dissenters were "notoriously known to be above two-thirds of the people." These later references refer to South Carolina, but it must be evident that whatever colonists went from England to North Carolina were doubtless influenced by the same motives as those which led colonists to South Carolina. Chalmers, in his *Political Annals of Carolina*,[26] speaks of Dissenters emigrating to North Carolina in such considerable numbers as contend for equality and preëminence, in the period before 1688. That Chalmers had some basis for his statement may be inferred from the fact that he had lived from 1763 until the outbreak of the Revolution in Baltimore, and during this time had been collecting material for his history.

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[23] Weeks is evidently wrong in his statement that the supposition that the early settlers of North Carolina were Dissenters began with the historian Williamson. Oldmixon was a hundred years earlier, and almost a contemporary of the first settlers.

[24] Oldmixon says that the older Blake had such influence "among Persons of his principle, I mean Dissenters, that many honest substantial Persons engaged to go over with him." See also Newman, *History of Baptist Churches in U. S.*, pages 222f. and authorities there quoted.

[25] *Colonial Records*, I, 638f.

We must, however, beware of supposing that any of the Dissenters, with the exception of the Quakers of whom I shall speak later, were organized into churches, in the period before 1700. The early settlers of North Carolina had not been led hither by ministers of their churches, nor had any ministers followed them and gathered them into churches; they had come as individuals and settled in whatever place they chose. As Chalmers remarks they may have been "equally destitute of religion and clergy." And we cannot doubt that whatever loyalty they may have had to their churches, whether Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian or Congregational, was considerably weakened in the long period during which they were without pastors and religious instruction.[27] I shall speak more particularly in another section of the Baptists among the early settlers.

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[26] Reprint in the *Historical Collection of South Carolina*, Volume II, 291f.

[27] Until the year 1701, with the exception of the journals of the Quakers, Fox and Edmundson, there is almost a total dearth of reference to religion in the documents relating to North Carolina history. This has led our more recent historians to declare that the early settlers in the Albemarle came to the colony solely for the fine bottom lands which were open for occupation, and that so far from being refugees from religious persecution nearly all were probably members of the Church of England. In reaching this conclusion they have disregarded the uniform tradition, they have failed to consider religious persecutions of the time in England and in America, and the probable effect of the constantly advertised proposal of the Lords Proprietors to give full

Something remains to be said of the character of the early settlers, their social station, economic condition, education, their morals and religion.

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religious freedom in Carolina; furthermore, they have failed to take account at all of the statements of historians before Williamson, some of them almost contemporary with the period of the first settlements. The view that there were few Dissenters among the first settlers was first set forth by Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire, in a brief pamphlet published in 1886 and afterwards enlarged and republished in DeRosset, *Church History in North Carolina,* pp. 43ff., and in the "N. C. Booklet," Vol. V, 247ff. This view was adopted by Col. W. L. Saunders in the "Prefatory Notes" to the first volume of the *Colonial Records;* by S. B. Weeks, in *The Religious Development in the Province of North Carolina,* 1892, and in later publications; by S. A. Ashe in the first volume of his *History of North Carolina;* by R. D. W. Connor in his *History of North Carolina—The Colonial Period;* and by Col. Fred A. Olds in his numerous and interesting writings on our North Carolina history. Now, if emphatic assertions alone could establish a statement as fact, the assertions of these men would make it incontrovertible that so far from being Dissenters these early settlers in the Albemarle "probably leaned to the Established Church." (Weeks.) They reach this conclusion first, like Weeks, by disregarding all authorities before Williamson, and declaring that Williamson, Hawks, and succeeding historians did not know what they were talking about. Bishop Cheshire sees that, though his case might be proved so far as the Quakers are concerned, he must dispose of the supposition that the colonists were Dissenters of other names. This he undertakes to do by asserting that religious refugees must be men "of intense religious feelings and convictions," and that if they had been present in considerable numbers in the Albemarle they would have been organized for worship. But this by no means follows. We have no means of determining what degree of dissent from the religious laws of Virginia and England was required to induce one to depart from those places and go to a land of no religious restrictions, where he would not be fined or imprisoned for not going to church. The settlers came in one by one, not in groups nor under religious leaders, and settled as chance or inclination led them, along the Sound and streams, without reference to the religious character of their neighbors, and so widely scattered that meetings of any kind were difficult. Nor does it follow that because some of these settlers are said to have desired good bottom lands they were precluded on that account from being influenced by the religious motive also. Thos. Woodard is arguing a case and speaking as a surveyor when he says of the settlers "it being only land they come for." Furthermore, those who would deny there were Quakers in the colony before 1672 have failed to consider the fact that in the first code of "Instructions for Our Governor of the County of Albemarle," that of 1667, (*Colonial Records,* I, 165f.) express provision is made, with undoubted reference to the Quakers, that those who do not choose to swear may subscribe their allegiance to the king. The same provision appears in subsequent codes of instructions. The Lords Proprietors at least contemplated the presence of Quakers at this time in the colony in sufficient numbers to make express reference to them. Accordingly, the early claim of the Quakers that they were "the first settlers in that country" to which Mr. Gordon, Missionary of the S. P. G., refers, is probably correct. *Colonial Records,* I, 714.

There were a few, but only a few, families of high social rank and of wealth. These were scattered here and there at great distances through the settlements with only occasional intercourse with one another. Some of these had framed houses with brick chimneys and large numbers of servants, both white indentured servants and negro slaves. Such families kept up communication with the mother country and sent their children either there or to Virginia to be educated. For their smaller children they had governesses who lived in the family. At the close of the Proprietary period in 1729 a few such families were collected in each of the five small towns which had grown up at that time, Edenton, Bath, New Bern, Beaufort, and Brunswick. But such families were very few in the whole Province. One evidence of this is that the missionaries of the Church of England constantly complained of the difficulty of obtaining board and lodging and even entertainment; another is that it was difficult to find in any parish twelve men of sufficient education and intelligence to make up a vestry.

Nearly all the early settlers of the Albemarle were of the industrious English middle class, attracted by the promise of political and religious freedom and the easy terms on which they might obtain land, and become independent landlords. If a colonist came bringing servants or dependents he was given fifty acres of land for each of them, as well as fifty acres for each member of his family, but the records show very few entries of great numbers of servants. Usually the farms were of an average size of about two hundred acres. As it was almost necessary in the absence of roads that every plantation should have water frontage it was ordered that this frontage should be not more than one-fourth the length of the lines running back from the river, and that no tract should be larger than six hundred and forty acres. Tracts of two hundred acres seem to have been contemplated by the Proprietors, eleven such tracts making up a "general lot," one of which was to be reserved for the Proprietors.[28] For each acre so held the colonists were to pay an annual quit-rent of one half-penny an acre. But as they complained that this was too much, the rent was fixed in the Deed of Grant of 1668 at one-quarter of a penny an acre.

Only a very few of the early settlers in the Albemarle came from England direct; just how many and who, we have no means of determining since nearly all of them came in by way of Norfolk, a Virginia port.[29]

We do know, however, the character of those who were leaving England in the first half of the seventeeth century for the American colonies. An able study by Wertenbaker, *The Planters of Colonial Virginia*, published in 1922, does away with many misconceptions previously held about the colonists of the Old Dominion. He establishes the fact that Virginia was not, as pictured in some histories, a "land of gay cavaliers, of stately ladies, of baronial estates and noble manors," since the rent rolls indicate that full ninety per cent of the freeholders were "the sturdy, independent class of small farmers." Very early Virginia became a distinctly agricultural community, in which immigration, like everything else, was shaped by the profit in growing tobacco. For the half century after the settlement in 1607 tobacco raising yielded large returns; the common laborers in the fields were paid five times as much as they could command in England. On this account a tide of immigrants set in from England to Virginia and continued during the seventeenth century, the annual influx being from 1,500 to 2,000. By far the greatest number belonged to the class of small farmers, or the yeomanry of England, who Macaulay declares were an "eminently manly and true-hearted race," who leaned towards Puritanism, persisted in hearing Presbyterian and Independent preachers, and regarded Popery and arbitrary power with unmitigated hostility.[30] Usually the person of this class who wished to make his way to America found that he was hindered by lack of means. The fare for the ocean voyage, even for the poorest accommodations, was six pounds sterling, or thirty dollars, at a time when he could earn at home not more than fifteen dollars a year. Accordingly, only a few of this class were able to come as independent settlers. But an expedient was found which enabled any strong-bodied laborer to go over: the planter advanced to him his passage money and placed him under legal bonds to work it out after reaching the colony. In other words he became an indentured servant. This system continued for more than a hundred years. As shown in the *Colonial Records* it was used very often in North Carolina. The planter who brought in these laborers profited not only from their labor, but also from the headright of fifty acres given him for every person so brought to the colony. In age, these laborers were young, ranging at their coming from sixteen to twenty-eight, with an average age of probably twenty-three at the time of their arrival and of twenty-eight when their period of service was over and they became freemen. Once free the greater part became small landowners themselves, and being industrious and moderate in their desires had a great competence.

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[28] *Colonial Records,* I, 173. Instructions to Governor Stevens. It had been suggested to Berkeley that each landowner be given only sixty-six feet of water front, but this suggestion was not heeded. *Colonial Records,* I, 51.

[29] I have examined the lists in Hotten's *Emigrants to America,* which has proved so valuable in determining the character and number of the emigrants to Virginia. But this work is of very little help to one seeking information about the North Carolina colonists. The few that are designated as going to Carolina in this period doubtless went to Charleston. Many who had names now common in North Carolina went to Norfolk, but nothing certain can be said of their destination.

But this golden age of colonial Virginia continued only until 1660. After the Restoration, the Navigation Act, which had not been strictly enforced on Virginia commerce hitherto, was so operated as to curtail the Virginian's market for his tobacco, and to give whatever profit there might be in the trade to the English sailor who transported his tobacco, and to the London merchant through whose hands it must go to the foreign purchasers and consumers. Labor was no longer profitable in Virginia and there was much unemployment. No longer could the freeman establish a home of his own. It was at this period of unemployment and unrest that lands to the south on the Chowan and the Roanoke began to be talked of. With true pioneer spirit many went thither. It is true that there was an economic reason for their going, but it was not so much the lure of good bottom lands to the south as the depression of agriculture in Virginia, and the desire to escape the poll tax and the tithe. Of course those who left for Carolina wanted good land, but as they were further from market their crops would be much less valuable than in Virginia. And they had hardly got to Carolina when they found that because of overproduction and English navigation laws they could not sell the tobacco they had raised; their first governor, William Drummond, agreed with the governors of Virginia and Maryland that no tobacco should be planted in these colonies for the year 1667.[31]

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[30] *History of England,* Chapter III.

It was this sturdy class of yeoman farmers, who, coming from England, had survived the perils of the Virginia climate, had been "seasoned," as the Virginians said, who doubtless constituted the greater part of the English immigration into the north part of North Carolina before the year 1730. They came at first in small numbers, as is shown by the slow growth of the population in North Carolina for the first thirty years. But before the end of the century another class of laborers had entered Virginia and was engaged in Virginia agriculture, which sent the yeoman class of Virginia into North Carolina in swarms and brought an increase in its population from five thousand in 1700 to more than thirty thousand in 1730. This was the African slaves. The Virginia yeoman could not maintain himself in the face of competition with slave labor. Already, as early as 1677, complaint was made that the poor whites were leaving the colony for North Carolina. In the last decade of the century the migration of the laboring classes and the small farmers to North Carolina is often deplored in the official documents of Virginia and sometimes in those of Maryland, while in the next quarter of a century it had become a matter of anxious official concern of the council and governor of Virginia. Many families of old inhabitants whose lands were worn out and many who had just completed their five-year term of service as indentured servants were seeking homes and farms in North Carolina. Among the emigrants were "great numbers of young men," attracted no doubt by the promise of lands on easier terms than in Virginia, but probably influenced more by other considerations, the pioneer spirit, impatience at the restraints of Virginia's laws on religion, and principally by the hope thus to escape the condition of poverty and inferior social status to which the presence of so many slaves in Virginia had reduced them.[32] The movement of the population was very much like that in the first half of the nineteenth century from our State to the free states of the West, especially Indiana. The main economic reason in both instances was that the emigrant desired to escape competition with slave labor. In both instances, too, the emigrant was seeking to free himself from the bonds of an inferior social rank forced upon him by slavery.

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[31] The above paragraph is based on information found in Wertenbaker.

Much complaint was also made by the Virginia authorities that North Carolina was a land of refuge for their criminals and runaway slaves.[33] It is doubtless true that a few criminals escaped from Virginia and sought safety in North Carolina, and it is very probable that of the few who thus eluded the Virginia constables the greater number had done nothing worse than contract a debt or fail to attend church on Sunday. As Fiske says,[34] an authentic record of hardly one could be found who "fled into North Carolina to escape the hangman's gallows," while the abuse that the exasperated Virginians heaped on North Carolina for harboring their run-away slaves was equally without excuse.[35]

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[32] This is the view of Wertenbaker. For complaints by the Virginia authorities on the loss of their people to North Carolina see *Colonial Records,* I, 646, 690, 692; see also *Colonial Records,* I, 631.

For complaints from Maryland, see *Colonial Records* I, 665, 683.

[33] *Colonial Records,* I, 371, 516, has this note: "One of the acts passed in 1669 protected newcomers from their foreign creditors for

Like all colonies North Carolina had a set of hardy, semi-savage pioneers who formed a fringe of the advancing settlements. Intolerant of work and of neighbors they built their huts in the woods, and disregarding the danger of murder by the savages they lived by hunting and fishing. They sought no permanent home and were ready to move on as soon as the surveyor appeared with his chain.

Another class found in the North Carolina of that day and not yet extinct was made up of the shiftless and lazy and easy-going. They have been found in all countries and in every age of the world. Such people would naturally develop amid the plenty of the early colony. Some typical specimens of this class were found by Colonel William Byrd, one of the commissioners appointed by the Governor of Virginia to join with the commissioners from North Carolina in running the boundary line between the two Provinces in 1729. He says:

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five years, and from this Albemarle came to be denounced as a resort of thieves, rogues, vagabonds, &c. It happens, however, that North Carolina was neither the pioneer nor alone in this kind of legislation. In 1642, Virginia passed a law forbidding suits to be brought on foreign debts. . . . In 1683 and 1696, South Carolina also passed acts suspending foreign debts." *Colonial Records,* I, xxxiii and xxxiv. The North Carolina act was amended shortly before 1707, excepting from protection debtors of the Queen, of the Government from which they came, guardians of orphans, &c., those who had come from Virginia, and those whose debts were made within six months before they left their former home. But on complaint of the Governor and Council of Maryland the Board of Trade asked the Queen to declare the law void. *Colonial Records,* I, 672ff. After this we hear less of it.

[34] *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors,* II, 316.

[35] *Colonial Records,* I, 513-17.

> The men make their wives rise out of their beds early in the morning, at the same time they lie and snore till the sun has one-third run his course, and dispersed all the unwholesome damps. Then after stretching and yawning for half an hour, they light their pipes, and under the protection of a cloud of smoke venture into the open air; though, if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return shivering to the chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms on the cornfield fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a small heat at the hoe, but generally find reasons to put it off until another time. Thus they loiter away their lives, like Solomon's sluggard, with their arms across, and at the end of the year scarcely have bread to eat.[36]

The great bulk of the population, however, was made up of small farmers who worked with their own hands. During the Proprietary period only here and there in the Province and at long distances could be found estates so large and well managed, as to be considered more than respectable.[37] Before 1720 nearly all the people lived on farms having water frontage on the Albemarle or Pamlico sounds or on the rivers themselves. Fish and game were abundant. Their lands were fertile, producing with little labor excellent crops of tobacco, wheat, corn, flax, and some cotton. Many varieties of fruits, among them the famous Indian peach, grew wild, while those who had the industry to plant orchards found themselves well rewarded.[38] There were also numerous native and imported varieties of vegetables which grew rapidly in the fertile soil of the gardens. But the impossibility of disposing of any surplus except of staple crops, and the difficulty of getting even these to market, did not encourage habits of thrift and industry among the planters of the early colony. They were content to make a comfortable living and had little incentive to do more. "The easy way of living in that country," says Lawson in 1708, "makes a great many planters very negligent, which, were they otherwise, that colony might now have been in a far better condition than it is, as to trade and other advantages, which an universal industry would have led them into."

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[36] Quoted by Hawks, *Hist. of N. C.*, II, 228.

[37] Rev. William Gordon, writing in 1709, says: "in all I have said to the disadvantage of the people in general, I must beg some exceptions, as few as you please, there being, here and there, a gentleman whose substance, sense in managing, and methods of living somewhat exceed the rest; but they live at such distances, that, as by their example they have but little influence, so, upon the same account, they can as easily contribute to the easiness of a missionary's condition." *Colonial Records*, I, 715.

[38] Byrd, quoted by Hawks.

In this land of "plenty and a warm sun," (Byrd), and with an abundance of provisions, "extremely cheap and extremely good," the whole population might have degenerated into indolence had it not been for the women. Lawson and Byrd are agreed in praising their industry and good housekeeping. "The women," says Lawson, "are the most industrious sex in that place, and by their good housewifery, make a great deal of cloth of their cotton, wool and flax; some of them keeping their families, though large, very decently appareled, both with linens and woolens, so that they have no occasion to run into the merchants debt, or lay their money out in stores for clothing." Byrd tells of a house where the tidy housewife kept the furniture clean and the pewter bright, and nothing was wanting to make the home comfortable.

North Carolina has always been handicapped by the want of good harbors on its own coast. This was especially true of the northeastern part of the Province in colonial days. Only small sloops and ketches could enter at Currituck, Roanoke, and Ocracoke, about all of which the shifting sands made navigation perilous. The planters of the Albemarle found their natural seaport in Norfolk, as they do to this day. But in the early days they encountered many difficulties in marketing their tobacco through Virginia. To the nearest Virginia market was a long way, part of which was over all but impassable roads. And in Virginia they found that they were not welcome, for their tobacco came into competition with that of the Virginia planters in a market where prices were never satisfactory. Under the restrictions of the Navigation Act, more rigidly enforced after 1660, all were required to pay a penny a pound export duty on their tobacco, to ship in English, Welsh or Irish bottoms, and to sell to London merchants. With transportation rates increased four or five fold for the benefit of the English seamen, and with a monopoly of the tobacco trade in the hands of the London merchants, the tobacco planters were robbed of all the profits of their industry. Especially was this true since the London merchants while buying the tobacco as low as possible refused to sell in the markets of Europe except at exorbitant prices, and thus kept the demand low. Nearly every year there was a surplus of tobacco which tended to depress prices. Suffering from these things the Virginians looked with no friendly eyes on tobacco from Carolina exposed for sale to the tobacco fleets which visited their waters, and finally by statute forbade its importation. Let the Albemarle planters, if they would, raise corn and make pork to feed the Negro slaves of the Virginia landlords—they had no right in the eyes of these exasperated Virginians to make tobacco, which the Virginians tried to believe was of inferior grade; if after all they persisted in making it, they certainly should not have the use of Virginia waters to get it to market. This unfriendly law, first passed in 1679,[39] continued on the statute books of Virginia till 1731, and while it did not succeed in its evident purpose to put an end to the production of tobacco in North Carolina, its depressing effect cannot be doubted.[40]

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[39] *Colonial Records,* I, 261f.

[40] "With corn and wheat and beef-cattle and hogs and poultry and game and fruits in abundance, the colonists ought to have had the best of good living. That Albemarle was a granary of Virginia and her butcher-pen we know. But what availed it if the North Carolina soil was more lusty than that of South Carolina? What availed it if the North Carolina tobacco was better than that of Virginia, as Governor Everard declared it to be? and what availed it if North Carolina 'hog and hominy' were abundant to excess? North Carolina had no port and Virginia embargoed her tobacco, her great money crop." Saunders in "Prefatory Notes," *Colonial Records,* I, xv.

The planters of the Albemarle, however, even before the embargo was placed upon their tobacco by Virginia, had been finding another market for it. They were selling it to the masters of the small New England vessels who braved the dangers of their inlets and coming almost to the doors of the planters sold them cloths, hats, and other wares of New England, or rum and sugar from the West Indies, in exchange for their tobacco, in which exchange extortionate profits went to the New England traders. All this was in violation of the Navigation Act, but seemingly without the ill will of the Lords Proprietors, who seem to have been annoyed by the attempted enforcement of any laws in their domain except such as they themselves had authorized. Until 1677 the Albemarle planters, availing themselves of the liberal terms of their charter, with no customs officer to check them, and with the seeming connivance of their governors, kept up a brisk trade with the New Englanders. As early as this they were making a million pounds of tobacco a year. Packing it into hogsheads of 400 pounds each they sold it without thought, in most instances, of the export tax of a penny a pound. Great was the dissatisfaction and resentment of the colonists when this arrangement was interfered with in 1677 by Thomas Miller, Acting Governor and Collector of Customs, and his seven deputies, one of whom he had sent to each of the rivers of the Albemarle. After suffering for five months from these collectors of revenue and seeing three thousand pounds exacted from them in the way of tobacco tax, the planters rose in rebellion, and with Durant and Culpepper as their leaders, arrested the governor and his deputies, taking possession of their papers and the collected revenues. Then accusing Miller of treason on a flimsy charge they put him in a log-pen prison. When he had escaped and made his way to England and in turn had brought charges of treason against those who had arrested him, he had the mortification of finding that the Lords Proprietors used their influence in freeing the accused of his charges. With this encouragement the colonists continued to sell their tobacco to whoever would buy. By the end of the century Scotch vessels also had joined in the illicit trade. Loud and frequent were the complaints made by the Virginia governors and the commissioners appointed by the Crown to report on the colonies that the Navigation Act was being disregarded in North Carolina and the Crown robbed of its rightful revenues. Edmund Randolph, one of these commissioners, found no attorney general in North Carolina whose duty it was to prosecute infractions of the Navigation Act, and in 1701, in a paper to the Board of Trade, declared that "Henderson Walker, the present Governor is no sort fit for the office." By Randolph's advice Governor Nicholson of Virginia was empowered to appoint members of a Court of Admiralty in a district composed of Virginia and the Carolinas. Randolph also suggested guarding the Carolina inlets to see that no ship entered or departed without proper papers. There could have been very little law enforcement during the turbulent days of Cary's Rebellion, and those immediately preceding, 1701-1711.

Conditions were worse during the Tuscarora war, which immediately followed, lasting for three years, and hardly better during the administration of Governor Eden which gave the pirate Blackbeard the freedom of our waters. With the government remiss in the prosecution of arch offenders the people generally continued to disregard such laws as interfered with their likings and interests, especially the navigation laws. As late as 1729 Colonel William Byrd espied a New England vessel in Currituck, which he supposed to be engaged in smuggling, and whose owners like other New England traders carried off "a great deal of tobacco without troubling themselves with paying the impertinent duty of a penny a pound."[41]

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[41] The records of most of the facts discussed in this paragraph are to be found in the first volume of the *Colonial Records*. I copy here some

The colonists never seemed to regard violation of the navigation laws as morally wrong; they rather considered

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statements from that volume which serve to indicate the character of the early North Carolina colonists.

First their isolation, p. 260: "For they cannot subsist without the planting of corn and tobacco, well knowing that without these (having made them their sole dependence) they must perish by hunger or want of clothing, . . . by reason of the many woods, swamps, rivers, creeks, and runs, this country being in no ways accessible by land but to the northward from Virginia, and that by three passes or avenues." p. 261: "The region between Virginia and the Albemarles extending one hundred miles without one inhabitant."

An event in Culpepper's Rebellion, 1678, caused by an effort to enforce the Navigation Laws: p. 272f. "The said Foster and the rest of the gang there met, who instead of choosing Burgesses, they by a shout of one and all cried out, 'We will have no lords, no Landgraves, no Casiques; we renounce them all and fly to the King's protection,' So down went the Lords Proprietors for about half an hour until the said Foster told them that would not do; whereupon they cried up the Lords again and went to choosing Burgesses as they called them, which Burgesses being chosen had instructions how they should proceed at their assembly, which was, first absolutely to insist upon a free trade to transport their tobacco where they pleased, and how they pleased, without paying any duty to the King; upon which they cried out, 'God damn the Collector' (Miller) and this deponent verily thought they would have murdered him."

With both New England and Scotch vessels slipping in and out by the dangerous inlets the navigation laws were a dead letter in North Carolina. Accordingly Edmund Randolph proposed that North Carolina should be annexed to Virginia, while the Governor of Virginia was actually empowered to appoint admiralty officers for this Province. In 1699 King William sternly ordered the Lords Proprietors to enforce the Navigation Act in their territory under threat of having their charter annulled. (p. 496ff.)

The continued disregard of the navigation laws in the eighteenth century, p. 536: "These colonies continue to be the refuge of pirates and illegal traders, and the receptacle of goods imported thither from foreign parts contrary to law. In return for which commodities those of the growth of these colonies are likewise contrary to law exported to foreign parts." p. 541: "The refuge of pirates and illegal traders." p. 547: "The tobacco made in that province is generally carried to Boston or to the islands next the Connecticut colony whence it is carried to Scotland &c., which fraud ought speedily to be prevented." p. 630f.: "They have not conformed themselves to the several Acts of Parliament for regulating trade and Navigation." (1706.) The disadvantage of lack of harbors: p. 663: "According to your Lordship's desire I shall touch a little upon Carolina. It hath two plantations, North and South Carolina. The North, in which I have been and lived some time there, has barred inlets into it; which spoils the trade of it and none but small vessels from New England and the Bermudas trade there; the soil being more lusty than South Carolina it produces tobacco, Indian corn, English wheat in abundance; beef, pork, hides, tar and so consequently pitch; furs, as beaver, otter, fox and wild cat skins, deer skins, tanned leather, tallow, &c."

them an impertinence designed to rob them of the fruits of their labor, as in point of fact they were. But the trade with smugglers was a tremendous economic disadvantage to the planters. The sailors made rates of exchange in the barter which were ruinous to them. The planters needed merchants who could have effected a fair exchange of commodities for them, but importing merchants they had none, and few of any kind. The profound effect of this isolation and unfavorable trade relations is well indicated in these words of Lawson:[42]

> Great plenty is generally the ruin of industry. Thus our merchants are not many, nor have these few applied themselves to the European trade. The planter sits contented at home, whilst his oxen thrive and grow fat, and his stocks daily increase; the fatted porklets and poultry are easily raised to his table, and his orchard affords him liquor, so that he eats and drinks away the cares of the world, and desires no greater happiness than what he daily enjoys.

From the court records of the period we get other indications of the moral character of the people. Before 1700, when the population did not exceed 5,000, crime was rare, the cases tried in court being almost all of a civil nature, principally for the collection of debts. Defamation of character was often the cause of action, since the inhabitants seem to have regarded their good name highly, while some of them spoke their minds about or to their neighbors too freely. A Quaker lost his temper and said, "Thee art a rogue and I'll prove it," and another called his neighbor "a perjured rogue, a hog-stealing rogue," and each found himself sued for damages, and was mulcted for a small amount. In these early days there were a few indictments for stealing or mismarking hogs, and a few indictments for heinous murders, one Thos. Dewham, Gent., having beaten a man to death with a whip, and a woman having killed her bastard child. Indictments on the charge of adultery were rather frequent, but mostly confined to a few notorious cases. In the general court at Edenton in March-April, 1720, a particularly active grand-jury presented three men for slander and abuse of justices of the peace, three road overseers for neglect of their roads, one man for irreverent and blasphemous words, one for adultery, two for retailing liquor without license, one for forgery, twelve for being drunk or swearing or both, two for helping a man charged with adultery to evade the law. All the men charged with drunkenness and swearing seem to have been attendants at court; one of them was charged with "cursing the grand-jury," and the number of oaths each defendant swore is carefully indicated. One of those charged with drunkenness was Rev. John Urmstone, who was probably present to see that the man who had spoken irreverently of his preaching got justice. Another was the foreman of the grand-jury at the next session of the court. Thus this court record gives us some suggestion as to the character of the people and of behavior at public gatherings where drinking and swearing seem to have been common.

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[42] Reprint of 1860, p. 146f.

We are more interested to know what was the kind of life on the plantations, at this time just on the eve of the rise of Baptist churches in the Province. Several influences were preserving the people from moral degeneration. One was the isolation of the estates in which the moral influence of the family was unhindered. Another was the large and increasing tide of immigrants who did not lose on coming the moral and religious habits which they had learned before coming. With the population increasing from 5,000 in 1700 to 10,000 in 1715 and 30,000 in 1730, the new immigrants must have been the predominating influence in the Province. As we shall see in the next section the Quakers were exerting all along a wholesome influence. One wishes as much could be said for the ministers of the Church of

Engand. As it was, the lack of religious instruction had begun to show in the character of the people. Perhaps the demoralization was not yet widespread but it was present in sufficient force to be noticeable. In this connection I quote Brickell who wrote a few years later:

> But though they (the people of North Carolina) are thus remarkable for their friendship, harmony and hospitality, yet in regard to morals, they have their share of the corruptions of the age; for as they live in the greatest ease and plenty, luxury of consequence predominates, which is never without its attendant vices. Can it be admired [wondered at] that the generality of them live after a loose and lascivious manner, when according to my observation, they have no clergy to instruct them, and recommend the duties necessary belonging to a Christian; and is it not natural to believe that impiety and immorality, when a people are void of those benefits, must sway the greater part of them?[43]

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[43] Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina,* p. 37.

## VI

# THE QUAKERS IN NORTH CAROLINA

## 1672-1729

A Quaker, William Edmundson, preached the first sermon in the limits of North Carolina, near the site of Hertford, in the year 1672. On this visit Edmundson remained in the colony only three days. Somewhat later in the same year George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, visited the colony, and for nineteen days did evangelistic work in the Albemarle. Five or six years later Edmundson returned for a second visit and found the Quakers "finely settled" here.

It can hardly be doubted that these missionaries found here many who were already warm towards their cause, and to this owed their success. The presence of Quakers in the Province is clearly contemplated in the instructions given to their first governor of the Albemarle, as well as to the succeeding governors for many years.[1] I have told above of the persecutions that drove the Quakers from England, Massachusetts, and Virginia. Quakers were very numerous at this time. On the accession of Charles the Second an investigation showed that 4,000 were in English prisons; in 1675 there were 10,000 in London alone, and before the end of the century not fewer than 60,000.[2] The statement in the preamble of the Virginia statutes against Quakers and "other recusants" was probably not false, as Hawks supposed, in declaring that they "assemble in great numbers." In 1672 after a dozen years of persecution they were still numerous in Virginia according to the journals of Edmundson and Fox. But many of them must already have taken refuge in the wilds of Carolina to avoid persecution under a Virginia statute which declared that they were "teaching and publishing lies, miracles, false visions, . . . endeavoring and attempting thereby to destroy religion," and providing that all Quakers found and arrested shall be "imprisoned without bail or mainprize till they do abjure this country or put in security with all speed to depart the colony and not return again." A journey of two or three days would bring them from Nansemond County where most of them had their home to the new settlements on the south where there was freedom.

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[1] *Colonial Records* I, 80. The year is 1665.

[2] Barclay quoted in *Social England,* 4, 361f.

In view of these considerations the early writers on the history of our State, Williamson, Martin, Hawks, and Moore, were doubtless correct in the view that many of our first settlers were Quakers, though this view has been assailed by Bishop Cheshire, and such historians as Ashe, Weeks, and Connor. The question as to how early the Quakers had come was raised before the colony was half a century old, and at that time the Quakers themselves maintained that they were the first settlers.[3] It is true, however, that for many years the Quakers of North Carolina had no resident teachers and leaders of prominence. They were dependent for religious quickening on visiting brethren, and these came all too rarely. After the last visit of Edmundson in 1676 none other seems to have come to the Province until after the settlement of Pennsylvania. After that the visitors came more frequently and by the end of the century were coming every year and by exhortations and encouragement were doing much to promote the spread of Quakerism in North Carolina.[4] An account of these may be found in the pages of Weeks.

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[3] See letter of Rev. William Gordon to the Bishop of London, *Colonial Records* I, 710f. Bishop Cheshire, who first challenged the view of the early historians, relies for proof of his statement almost wholly on a statement made by William Edmundson in his record of his first visit in 1672 to the effect that Henry Phillips, at whose house Edmundson stopped, had not seen a Friend for seven years before. Martin, *History of North Carolina*, vol. I, 155, had taken this to mean that Phillips had seen no Quaker teacher or preacher such as Edmundson was. But taking it to mean all that Cheshire supposes it to mean, we must remember that Phillips had probably seen only a small part of the settlers who had by this time made their homes along the hundreds of miles of shore lines of the Sound and its tributaries. Again, in a paper addressed to the Lords Proprietors, dated September 25, 1679, with reference to matters of the "Culpepper Rebellion," twenty-one

During the years from 1672 to 1683 the growth of the Quakers in the State was probably confined almost entirely to the colonists who came from England and Ireland and Virginia, but during the remaining years of the seventeenth century many converts were made in the Albemarle itself. This was due in no small measure to the influence of John Archdale, an Englishman of good birth and much ability who had embraced the Quaker faith as early as 1681. He was first in North Carolina in 1683, and already virtually a

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persons who describe themselves "people of God who are in scorne called Quakers," declare that they "have been inhabitants in Carolina since the yeares 1663 and 1664." Of course it is possible, as Ashe insists, *History of North Carolina,* I, 134, that they were converts made by Edmundson and Fox or later immigrants, but the probabilities are that some of them had been Friends on coming. Weeks asserts, *Southern Quakers,* etc., p. 31, "The fact that none of the traveling Friends had visited Albemarle before Edmundson is conclusive proof that no Friends were there." In this he leaps to his conclusion. Weeks also says, p. 35, that the marked success of the Quakers after 1672 would indicate that they were the only Dissenters in the Province. He was perhaps ignorant of the fact that a few years before defections from the Baptist Churches of London to Quakerism had almost depleted some of them.

[4] Letter of Henderson Walker to the Bishop of London, *Colonial Records* I, 571f., "George Fox, some years ago, came into these parts, and by strange infatuations, did infuse the Quakers' principles into some small number of people; which did and hath continued to grow ever since very numerous, by reason of their yearly sending in men to encourage and exhort them to their wicked principles."

Proprietor, since he had bought the share of Lady Berkeley for his son. He was acting Governor during the absence of Governor Seth Sothel from the Province in 1685-86. In 1694 he was named by the Proprietors as Governor of both North and South Carolina. Though his official residence was in Charleston he spent two months in North Carolina in the summer of 1695 and visited the Province again in 1696. He was altogether the best Governor during the Proprietary period, doing much to encourage habits of peace and industry among the inhabitants. Originally the new county on the Pamlico was named Archdale in his honor. He had a daughter married here in 1688 to Emmanuel Lowe, a man of prominence, while his step-daughter was married to Thomas Cary, Governor of North Carolina in 1705-06 and 1708-10. Another son-in-law, John Dawson, succeeded Archdale as Proprietor in 1709. The following statement by Weeks[5] summarizes the far reaching influence of Archdale:

> Archdale's faith tended also to encourage religion and morality. The Quakers thus received an impetus in North Carolina which gave them the prestige and power needed to carry them through the struggle of the next twenty years. They now began to appear more frequently than formerly as holders of office in both the Carolinas. The Council, the courts and the Assembly soon showed a preponderance of Quaker influence. There was a material reward for being a Quaker, and Churchmen and others who thus found it to their interests deserted their own creeds to enroll themselves among Friends. They were thus prepared for the coming struggle with the Establishment.

With the advantage thus obtained the Quakers, in spite of the destructive opposition of which I shall speak later, continued to be during the Proprietary period the largest and most influential body of Christians in the Province. In 1703, Thomas Chalkey, an English Quaker, went to the Pamlico and held several meetings on each side of the river, from which the Quaker settlements at Core Sound and on Contentnea Creek had their origin. But during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Albemarle, and especially the precincts of Perquimans and Pasquotank, remained the seat of Quaker influence and power. Here they had one yearly meeting in close union with the Friends' meetings of Pennsylvania, one quarterly meeting, three monthly meetings and five or six meetings of worship.[6] The number of Quakers in the Province, like that of the inhabitants generally, at the various periods of the colony, is largely a matter of conjecture. We have seen that in 1703, when it is thought the population was about five thousand, Governor Walker said the Quakers were "very numerous." In this year half of the burgesses chosen were Quakers. In 1708 however, Reverend James Adams, a missionary, said that the Quakers were not a seventh part of the inhabitants, and a year later the Rev. William Gordon declared that they were about the tenth part. These estimates, however, are probably little more than conjectures without any solid basis of fact.[7] Adams reported that he had found in Pasquotank 210 Quakers in a total population of 1,332, in Currituck one Quaker in a population of 539. The largest Quaker population was in Perquimans, where the shortness of the list of jurymen, from which after 1715 Quakers were excluded, would indicate that three-fourths of the inhabitants were Quakers. With the great influx of colonists during the last years of the Proprietary period they must have formed a decreasing element in the population. Hawks supposes their number was about 2,000, in a population which he estimated at 10,000.

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[5] Weeks, *op. cit.*, page 61.

The Quakers were relatively most prominent and influential in the last decade of the seventeenth century. At this time they alone of all the inhabitants had any semblance of religious organization; they alone had unity of purpose and interest. Add to this that they alone had Christian worship and taught the precepts of religion and morality, and we can understand the respect and influence with which they were invested in the social and political life of the Province. This happy condition, which lasted hardly more than a decade, has been called by Weeks the "Golden Age for the Quakers of Carolina."[8]

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[6] Weeks, *op. cit.*

[7] *Colonial Records*, I, 686, 711.

This prominence of the Quakers had never perhaps been looked upon with complaisance by the members of the Church of England in the Albemarle. That they found their political ascendancy irksome is shown by certain expressions in the letter of Henderson Walker, Deputy Governor,[9] and in the letters of the missionaries. The adherents of the Established Church were moved to great indignation when they saw themselves turned out of the Council and other places of trust, for no other reason, as they supposed, than that they were members of the Church of England, while their places were filled by shoemakers and mechanics, whose chief recommendation was that they were Quaker preachers, but, in the eyes of the Churchmen, notorious blasphemers of the Church.[10] Accordingly these Churchmen were ready to welcome the first opportunity to assail the power and influence of the Quakers. This opportunity came when at the opening of the eighteenth century they were asked to coöperate with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, of which I shall speak at greater length below, in measures to establish the Church of England in the Province. In that year Governor Henderson Walker by sharp political practices which he called "a great deal of care and management," deprived the Quakers of their power in the Assembly and worked through it the first Vestry Act. Under this law the Province was to be laid out in parishes, churches built, parish ministers given thirty pounds a year, the money for all this to be provided by a general poll tax on tithables.

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[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

[9] *Colonial Records*, I, 572.

[10] *Colonial Records*, I, 687. Letter of Rev. James Adams to the Secretary.

The Quakers recognized this as a direct attack on themselves, as in point of fact it was. The letters of Henderson Walker and the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel leave no room for doubt that they hoped to build the establishment on the wrecks of Quakerism.[11] The Quakers, as was natural, were quick to take up the fight, and with the help of the other Dissenters effectually interfered with the general enforcement of the various vestry acts. The act of 1701 was disapproved by the Proprietors. In 1704 Robert Daniel became Deputy Governor of North Carolina. He owed his appointment to Nathaniel Johnston, who was sent in 1704 to be Governor of Carolina with power to appoint a deputy for the northern province. Johnston came over with express instructions from John Lord Granville, the Palatine, to see that the Church of England was established by law both in North Carolina and South Carolina. Johnston himself brought it about that the South Carolina legislature passed such a law as Granville wished. It is generally assumed that Daniel secured the enactment of a similar law in North Carolina. At any rate the Dissenters in both provinces sent a delegation to England while that of the Southern province made a strong protest, still extant, against the act sponsored by Johnston. Both were successful. On appeal to the House of Lords and to the Queen the South Carolina law was annulled, Johnston removed from the governorship, and the Lords Proprietors rebuked. At the same time John Porter, a Quaker from North Carolina, was successful with his mission, whether it was to secure the repeal of a law already passed or secure North Carolina from the threat of such a law. Daniel was removed and in his stead Thomas Cary became Deputy Governor. For several years now the Quakers under the leadership of Porter had charge of affairs in the Province. They made and unmade governors at will, not always being careful of the political measures used to attain their ends. The whole colony was now in turmoil. William Glover, who became President of the Council in 1706, showed opposition to the Quakers and was forced to make way for Thomas Cary in 1708. When in 1711 Edward Hyde, who had been appointed Governor, but who came to Carolina without his credentials of office, presented himself, Cary refused to vacate. Then started the civil war between Cary and Hyde known as Cary's Rebellion. In this Cary had the sympathy and moral support of the Quakers. After a year of riotous turmoil Hyde with the help of Governor Spotswood of Virginia gained the ascendancy and Cary was obliged to flee. Hyde's success was the beginning of the end of the Quakers as a political factor in North Carolina. Their enemies did not fail to charge them with all the excesses, real or imaginary, with which they charged Cary. Especially did they charge that the Quakers acting with Cary, in resentment for their defeat, stirred up the Indians to the terrible Tuscarora war which began with the massacre of more than two hundred of the whites in the Pamlico section on September 22, 1711. This story was repeated by Governor Spotswood of Virginia who declared that it was generally believed in Carolina.[12] Governor Hyde charged that the Quakers had not only taken up arms in support of Cary, but that John Porter, the Quaker, had gone in person to several of the Indian towns and tried to stir them up to cut off man, woman and child.[13] Hyde and his Council made like charges against "several other desperate and evil minded persons as also Emmanuel Low, Gabriel Newby, and many others of the people called Quakers."[14] These stories were accepted as true by Hawks, who declared that the "Cary Rebellion" was in reality a "Quaker Rebellion," and that its leaders, Cary and Porter, may be considered as the responsible authors of the dreadful Indian war that began in 1711."[15] John Fiske, however, has pointed out[16] how weak is the evidence on which the charges are based and well says that "No such infernal wickedness is needed to account for the Indian outbreak." Governor Pollock, who conducted the Indian war with such ability and success after the death of Governor Hyde in 1712, is on record as saying that though the Quakers may have proved refractory in previous administrations he "must acknowledge that they have been as ready (especially in supplying provisions for the forces) as any others in the government."[17]

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[11] *Colonial Records,* I, 572, 602, 708f., 733f.

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[12] *Colonial Records,* I, 811.

[13] *Colonial Records,* I, 802. Of like tenor is a letter of Spotswood, *Colonial Records,* I, 796.

[14] *Colonial Records,* I, 806.

In this Cary Rebellion Weeks sees the beginning of the struggle for freedom in state and religion which culminated in the Revolution of 1776. The following statement by him[18] is probably a correct interpretation of the matter:

> Dr. Hawks follows the example of the colonial leaders in disparaging the principles of Cary and his followers; with him they are rebels and indefensible. A more charitable view, that these men were struggling for political rights against the representatives of despotic power, has been recently advanced by Hon. William L. Saunders and Captain Samuel A. Ashe, and has been adopted by Hon. Kemp P. Battle; but the writer believes that the "rebellion" stands for more than a political struggle. It was the uprising of a free people against the attempt of foreign and domestic foes to saddle on them a church establishment with which they had no sympathy, and he has treated it as such. He does not believe it possible to explain the extent of the commotion on any other basis.

But there can be no doubt that there was much resentment against the Quakers in the minds of all of the partisans of Governor Hyde. It was the turmoil of the "Cary Rebellion" which had weakened the colony so as to invite the attack of the Indians. And when, as the war was in progress, their all was at stake, their country, wives, children, estates, and all that was dear to them, it is small wonder that they looked with much resentment and animosity on the Quakers who remained quietly at home and refused to take up arms for the common safety. Accordingly, when the war was over, they were ready to welcome the Acts of Assembly which left the Quakers without the right to vote or hold office, along with negroes, mulattoes, and aliens; acts which denied them the right to sit on juries and to offer evidence in criminal cases.[19] From our vantage point we can see in all this only infamous injustice to the Quakers, but it is certain that the friends of the Establishment saw in it only victory. The Quakers had taken the first vestry act as an encroachment on their rights; they had resisted as they only could resist by an appeal to politics; for some years they had the stronger leaders who were able to secure the coöperation of all the Dissenters; but after a few years Churchmen had gained the mastery and used their power against them tyrannically. We shall see later how little their ruthless course availed them.

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[15] *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, 523.
[16] *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors,* Vol. II, 298.
[17] *Colonial Records,* II, 145.
[18] *Church and State in North Carolina,* p. 8, repeated in *Southern Quakers and Slavery,* p. 162f.

It is pleasant, however, to record the fact that the Quakers have a just right to our esteem regardless of their political activities. They were, as I have said, during nearly all the Proprietary period the one organized denomination of Christians in the province. Probably from the days of Edmundson and Fox, certainly very soon thereafter, they had regular meetings at appointed places of worship. The first monthly meeting of which we have record was at the house of Francis Toms in 1680.[20] We have records of other meetings in the years 1681-85 at the houses of Henry Prows, Christopher Nicholson, and William Wyatt.[21] "First day meetings" are spoken of as early as 1702, but it is probable that they were regularly held from the beginning.

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[19] As the Act relating to biennial elections of 1715, *Colonial Records* II, 213, empowered election officials to require an oath of every one offering to vote, Quakers were thereby virtually disfranchised.

[20] Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, p. 17.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

During the early years of the Province their places of worship were the dwellings of the more wealthy members. A church entry of 1698 directs that "meeting houses be kept in good repair."[22] This would indicate that even at this early date the Quakers already had houses set aside for worship. For their simple services any building which had a room large enough for the congregation was sufficient. Such a meeting house was not called church, a term used in North Carolina long after the colonial period to describe only a building of worship of the Episcopal Church. The first record of the building of a Quaker meeting house in the Province was one in Pasquotank in 1703.

We are interested not least of all in the influence of these early Quakers on the moral and religious life of their own people and the colony generally. Fortunately we are not left ignorant on this subject since we have the minutes of several of their meetings, for the years 1702-29.[23] These minutes show that the discipline and care of the Quakers of the Albemarle extended to every phase of the private and public life of their membership. They were concerned in their meetings to see that their members lived at peace with one another, were honest and sober, and charitable and kind in their words to or about one another; that they should be pure and temperate in their lives and "keep out of excess of meats, drinks, and apparel, and smoking and chewing tobacco; to keep no social fellowship with those who had been excluded, to attend the monthly meetings regularly and be on time and be careful and watchful against sleep and drowsiness in time of worship, which is very dishonorable, but to endeavor to answer the end of our meeting together, which is to worship God." The weak were admonished and encouraged, the unrepentant were excluded, but only after much kindly effort to bring the guilty to see his error and depart from it. Sometimes a great offender was required to bring a paper of his condemnation to the meeting and also to publish it on the court-house door. Their members were to avoid, on pain of expulsion, going to court, taking oaths, or serving as soldiers in war, though there is much evidence that in some of these matters the discipline was not very rigidly enforced. Relief was given to fatherless children, and care was taken to secure the rights of stepchildren. As under the laws of the Province Quakers were allowed to marry according to their own usage, they enforced a very wise marriage code. A couple desiring to become husband and wife appeared before the meeting and announced their purpose. A committee was appointed to "inspect their clearness." At the next meeting they appeared a second time, and if the committee of inspection had found "nothing to the contrary but that they were clear," the couple were left at liberty to take one another in the order of truth. By being clear was meant that neither party had had other serious love affairs. Quakers were forbidden to marry or give in marriage outside the society. For the marriage itself a committee was appointed to see that there should be orderly behavior. Degrees of consanguinity were respected, and we are told that "the said Betty being the said William's father's brother's daughter's daughter," the meeting objected to their marriage as being within the fourth degree. Widows and widowers were expected to wait a decent time before beginning the search for another mate; we have a minute giving a paper of condemnation of one Edward Mayo who acknowledged that he had courted widow Gorman "too soon after the death of her husband and the death of my wife." Such was the wholesome discipline exercised by these Quakers in a day when they almost alone stood for religion and righteousness in the Province. With reference to the work and influence of the Quakers in the days of the Proprietors Hawks has justly said:

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[23] The best and most copious list of extracts from these minutes is to be found in Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, pp. 317-329. The original minutes, such as have escaped fire, are in the library of Guilford College.

> We may, indeed, sometimes smile at quaintness of expression (and many a Quaker of this day would probably smile with us), but we have no inclination to smile as we read on, and find in the records of the meetings a watchful regard for the preservation of moral discipline, a tender pity for the erring, a Christian effort by fraternal persuasion to bring them back to the right path, a considerate regard of the penniless orphan, a reconciliation of quarrels, a suppression of slander, and numerous other particulars, all of which show us, that in the unavoidably rude state of an early settlement in the wilderness, when human law was sometimes powerless and sometimes capricious, it was no disadvantage to have in exercise the advisory and disciplinary control of a religious body, ordinarily most peaceful and industrious, to come in aid of the weakness of municipal authority, and, in some degree, supply its deficiencies.[24]

Unwitting acknowledgment of the high moral and religious character of the Quakers is contained in a letter of a missionary of the Church of England, who writing in 1703 of the religious classes of the inhabitants of North Carolina says: "The second sort are a great many who have no religion, but would be Quakers, if they were not obliged to lead a more moral life than they are willing to comply to." This confession is sufficient to offset the unkind things said against the Quakers by practically every missionary of the Church of England who labored in the Province during the years 1700-25. Rev. James Adams spoke of them with contempt as "shoemakers and mechanics," and called their preachers blasphemers,[25] Blair called them "very ignorant,"[26] Gordon spoke of their "ignorance and obstinancy," and declared that they were promoters of political confusion,[27] Urmstone prates of their "nonsensical tenets," while Governor Henderson Walker, after depriving the Quaker members of the assembly of their votes by political trickery, wrote to the Bishop of London of their "wicked and pernicious principles.[28] But justice is finally done them by the blunt Governor Burrington, who writing on January 1, 1733, said:

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[24] Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, 367.

[25] *Colonial Records,* I, 687.

[26] *Colonial Records,* I, 601.

[27] *Colonial Records,* I, 711.

> The Quakers in this Government are considerable for numbers and substance; the regularity of their lives, hospitality to strangers, and kind offices to new settlers, inducing many to be of their persuasion.[29]

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[28] *Colonial Records*, I, 572.

[29] *Colonial Records*, III, 430.

## VII

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1701-1729

It may occasion surprise to people of this day that the Church of England was so slow in providing religious advantages for the American colonists. In most of the colonies south of New England the government was largely in the hands of its adherents. The greater number of the more influential and wealthy inhabitants confessed that faith. But yet, if we are to believe a historian of that church,[1] up to the time of the Revolution of 1688 the Established Church had scarcely an existence in these colonies except, of course, in Virginia where it had the favor and support of the colonial government from near the beginning continuously except during the time of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate of Cromwell. But in Massachusetts the Puritans, in Rhode Island the Baptists, in Pennsylvania the Quakers, in Maryland the Catholics, gave tone and character to the religious life. In North Carolina hardly a trace of the Church of England is to be found before the year 1700, while in South Carolina there was not more than one congregation of that faith.

Everything goes to show that the people of England at this time gave very little thought to missionary work, but the missionary spirit had not been altogether without manifestation among them. Under the State Church of Cromwell an endowed corporation was formed to send the Gospel to the American Indians. On the Restoration in 1660, the property of this corporation came into the hands of the Church of England and a new corporation was formed, "for the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen natives of New England and the parts adjacent in America." In 1679 the corporation enlarged its plans so as to include the colonists as well as the natives, and lent its help towards building the First Church of Boston. The leader of this new departure was Dr. William Compton, then Bishop of London who was Diocesan of all the American Colonies. After the stormy period of the Revolution of 1688 he returned to this enterprise with renewed interest, and in 1692 appointed Dr. Thomas Bray to go as Commissary to Maryland and to make a study of religious conditions throughout the English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard.

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[1] Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* Vol. II, p. 355ff.

This Dr. Thomas Bray is worthy of note even in a Baptist history since he was the first rightly to understand the nature of the religious destitution in certain of the American colonies and the first to plan for the spread of the Gospel in them. He was in 1692 about thirty-six years of age and had already attained distinction by his interest in the work of his church. Although he was a man of no extraordinary genius and was without special influence he was now starting on a career of untiring, unselfish service which justifies the statement of his biographer that "it would be difficult to point to any one who has done more real and enduring service to the Church."[2] After his appointment as Commissary to Maryland he delayed his departure for the colony because the royal assent had not been given to any of the acts for the Establishment of the Church passed by the Maryland Legislatures in 1692, 1694, 1695, 1696. In the meantime he was busy with plans for the spread of the Gospel both in the American plantations and elsewhere. He saw that for the progress of the church in the colonies ministers would have to be provided from England. In searching for these he found that he could enlist only poor men who were unable to buy books. Thus he was led to project his plan of providing parochial libraries not only for such missionaries as should go to the New World but also for the deaneries of England and Wales. This plan developed into a larger scheme and took shape in the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," the oldest society of the Church of England. It may be said here that as a result no fewer than thirty-nine parochial libraries were placed in the American colonies, the first and largest, of a thousand volumes, at Annapolis, and three of perhaps not more than fifty volumes each in North Carolina. As early as 1698 Bray had conceived the idea of the society which received a royal charter in June, 1701, as "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel." This charter he had sought in 1698, but the time was not yet ripe. The Society was formed, however, at that time and its work supported altogether by voluntary contributions until the royal charter was granted, as it was chiefly supported thereafter. The scope of its work extended to the establishment of libraries and charity schools and the support of missionaries in the colonies.

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[2] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

Dr. Bray arrived in Maryland on March 12, 1700, and with characteristic zeal set about securing the passage by the legislature of a satisfactory act for an Establishment. He advised the attorney-general of the Province in the framing of the act, and without his assistance, and encouragement, says Hawks,[3] no establishment would have been attempted, or if attempted would have succeeded. Soon after the act was passed Bray returned to England to secure royal approval for it. In this purpose he was successful in spite of the strong opposition of the Quakers.

As the Maryland act for the Establishment was doubtless a pattern for the acts soon after passed in North Carolina and other colonies it deserves our examination. It provided for the appointment of vestries and the levying of a tax for support of ministers, and lay readers, the purchase of glebes and the building of churches and chapels and the upkeep of churchyards. For the support of the Establishment all, Episcopalians, Catholics who were said to be a twelfth part of the inhabitants, Quakers who were not much more than one-tenth of the inhabitants according to Bray, and all other Dissenters were to be taxed without distinction.

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[3] *P. E. Church in the U. S.*, II, chap. 4.

But the law is especially interesting to us because it reveals in other provisions the spirit of intolerance with which the most evangelical of the ministers of the Church of England set about missionary work among the American colonists. The Maryland act provided that the Prayer Book of the Church of England should be used in public worship not only by the ministers and readers of that church but also by "all and every minister and reader in every church, or other place of public worship throughout this Province." There was to be no toleration for the Roman Catholics for whose benefit Maryland had been settled, and none for Quakers, who by this time had several societies in the Province, none for other Dissenters. For as Hawks says,[4] "To require the use of the book of common prayer 'in every Church, or other place of public worship' in the Province, was, in effect, to destroy all toleration of Dissenters, and to prohibit them from assembling for public worship at all, because they could not follow in it that mode which they preferred." It should be said that King William of England, with a more tolerant spirit than Bray, refused to approve the law until it was so amended as to annul this most unchristian provision so far as it applied to Protestant Dissenters, but not as it applied to Catholics. Bray's intolerant spirit was further manifested in his speaking of the Quakers of Pennsylvania as "unbelievers." Accordingly, we are not to be surprised when we find the missionaries of the Society he founded manifesting a like spirit in speaking of Quakers and other Dissenters in North Carolina.

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[4] *Ibid.*, II, 98.

Part of Bray's function in coming to Maryland was to secure information as to the state of religion in the colonies. For this purpose he had expected to visit the various colonies, and the Lords Proprietors had, on Bray's departure from England, advised Governor Harvey and the Council to expect him.[5] But owing to the shortness of Bray's stay his purpose of visiting the colonies was not carried out. He secured otherwise the desired information. On the basis of it he stated that forty missionaries were needed at once. And for missionaries he declared picked men were needed, not the refuse of the clergy in England, not the old and decrepit, but men in the vigor of life, of exemplary walk and conversation, versed in the ways of the world, and experienced in the work and duties of a pastorate, and possessed with a "true missionary spirit, having an ardent zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of men's souls."[6] He asked each bishop in England to select at least one missionary and provide for his support by voluntary contributions in the various parishes, placing the money in the hands of some one in London, subject to the drafts of the missionary in America. The maximum amount thus put at the disposal of a missionary seems to have been fifty pounds sterling.

The first missionary sent by Dr. Bray to North Carolina was Daniel Brett. He came probably in the year 1700. Nothing is known of the work he did in North Carolina. For the first six months of his residence here he behaved himself with propriety, as he had most probably done at his home in England. But after this he fell into a life of sin and wickedness, indulging in excesses so awful that his friends refrained from naming them, Governor Walker declaring that he behaved himself "in a most horrid manner," while William Gale declares that "he was ye monster of ye age."[7] The friends of the Church felt that he did lasting injury to their cause with the colonies, and he doubtless did. But what is more serious Brett's conduct was most harmful to the religious and moral life of the Province in general. With the Quakers the only organized body of Christians in the Province, with little or no preaching by Independents such as Baptists and Presbyterians, the irreligion of the Province was deplorable. Even the most respectable members of society lived such lives as to be cried out against. "Most who profess themselves doctors and attorneys are scandals to their profession. The decay of Christian piety is in such large characters that he who runs may read." So wrote William Gale from Perquimans in 1703.[8]

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[5] *Colonial Records,* I, 520.

[6] Hawks, *Ibid.,* II, 110.

During the stay of Brett or soon after was passed the first Vestry Act, that of 1701. I have already discussed its provisions in speaking of the Quakers. I have also stated above what I repeat here, that the passage of this law in North Carolina was a part of the general program of Dr. Thomas Bray for the spread of the Gospel in the American Colonies, and that in its terms it approximated the Maryland law as far as possible.[9] Though this law was disallowed by the Proprietors on the ground that the stipend provided, thirty pounds a year, was not sufficient, yet it continued to be the basis on which the Vestry of Chowan acted for many years. One important provision of it, a provision which continued to be found in all the vestry acts until the time of Governor Tryon, was to put the choice of pastors in the hands of the vestries, and not in the hands of bishops and governors. Under it was begun the building of churches in the precincts of Chowan, Perquimans and Pasquotank, but only that in Chowan was probably ever completed. This act aroused much opposition. It would doubtless have been repealed had it not been disallowed. So much did the opposition of the Quakers impress Governor Walker that he declared to the Bishop of London that all the children would grow up heathen unless the Bishop could do something to prevent it.

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[7] *Colonial Records,* I, 572; *State Records,* XXII, 732.

[8] *State Records,* XXII, etc., quoted in Ashe, *History of North Carolina,* I, 152.

[9] Weeks will have it that the people of North Carolina acted on their own initiative in this matter. The facts I have related about Dr. Bray's mission and the further fact that Brett was already in the Province before the passage of the Act are sufficient to show that Weeks was wrong in his supposition. See also the letter of the Proprietors to Harvey, of December 20, 1699. *Colonial Rcords,* I, 520.

The next missionary of the Church of England to come to North Carolina was the Reverend John Blair. Coming by way of Virginia he arrived among the people of the Albemarle on January 24, 1704. He remained here only a few months, when getting discouraged because the first vestry act had been disallowed and no provision was made for his support, he returned to England, falling into the hands of the French on his way home and being kept prisoner for nine weeks. But we have him to thank for a vivid account of his mission to North Carolina which reveals the difficulties under which a missionary worked and the character of the inhabitants.

When appointed as a missionary Mr. Blair had received a bounty of fifty pounds from Lord Weymouth and the Queen's bounty of twenty pounds allowed all the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In addition he had received five pounds from the Bishop of London. Most of this money he had been obliged to spend in fitting himself out for his journey and for his passage, so that when he reached his destination he had not more than twenty-five pounds. Of this he spent fourteen pounds for two horses, one for himself and one for his guide, for he could not travel without both horses and a guide. Nor was this all. He had to pay ferry charges to get set over the many streams, finding the most of them owned by Quakers, and he found it necessary to pay many other expenses. The result was that before the end of two months he had spent not only all the money he had brought with him, but had also been obliged to dispose of the necessaries he had brought along for his own use, in order that he might satisfy his creditors. In his earnest efforts to serve the people he rode on an average thirty miles a day, Sundays only excepted, and often lay whole nights in the woods. He would have preferred to settle in one precinct and to minister so far as he could to its people alone. But he had told the three vestries already organized of Lord Weymouth's bounty, and these vestries, maintaining that the bounty was intended for the whole Province, insisted that Blair should distribute his services among them all impartially, though they were not willing to contribute a penny for his support. All will agree with Hawks that for beneficiaries of a charity this was a "tolerably cool specimen of impudence," and that the community he was seeking to evangelize "with some few exceptions, was probably as near heathenism as any community calling itself Christian ever was."[10] These people, he said, were of four sorts: Quakers, those who would be Quakers but for the necessity of living a moral life in that church; and a third sort, "something like Presbyterians, which sort is upheld by some idle fellows who have left their lawful employment, and preach and baptize through the country, without any manner of orders from any sect or pretended church." The fourth sort were friends of the Church of England, who though fewest in number were yet the better sort of people. All these except the last class were resolved to allow no establishment that would tax them for the support of religion; and the governor at that time encouraged them in this attitude. Accordingly, after two months of hard labor in which he had baptized many children and preached twice on every Sunday, he returned to England to escape starvation, having contracted a heavy debt. He advised that hereafter two missionaries at a time come to North Carolina.

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[10] *History of North Carolina,* II, 342, 344.

And here we may say a word with reference to the vestries. They consisted of twelve men, and the members of the vestries created by the act of 1701 were named in the act. Not all were members of the Church of England, but there were numbers of Dissenters among them except perhaps in the Vestry of the Chowan precinct. They chose from among themselves two of their number to serve as Church Wardens, whose duty it was to assess and collect the parish dues from the tithables of the precinct, and to keep an account of all receipts and expenditures. These vestries had charge not only of matters pertaining to the Church, such as providing buildings, glebes and church furniture, and the support of pastors, but they also were entrusted with the care of the poor and orphans, and the oversight of standards of weights and measures. Thus their duties were partly civic and partly ecclesiastical. It was on this account, doubtless, that others than members of the Church of England were entitled to and accepted the vestry office.

Of all these vestries during the Proprietary period that of St. Paul in Chowan was by far the most active. In it were some of the most enthusiastic and able Churchmen in the Province. They built the first church and put forth some efforts of their own to maintain a Christian ministry. After the departure of Rev. John Blair a certain Rev. Henry Gerrard presented himself to them, and representing that because of the great distances and the "dirtyness" of the roads he could not undertake to serve more than one precinct, he was accepted by the Chowan vestry as the pastor of their parish alone, and it was further agreed that in addition to the thirty pounds which the vestry hoped to raise by taxation an additional twenty-five pounds should be given him by the private subscriptions of the vestrymen themselves."[11] This seems to have been the first private subscription ever made towards a pastor's salary in North Carolina, and some of the amounts subscribed were very liberal, Col. Thomas Pollock and Mr. Edwin Moseley subscribing five pounds each. But their noble purpose was frustrated by Mr. Gerrard himself. After three months, at a meeting in January 1706, the vestry took notice of "several scandalous reports" about the said Mr. Gerrard, showing that he was believed to have engaged in "several debauched practices which (if true) tends highly to the dishonor of Almighty God and the scandal of the church," which reports Mr. Gerrard was required in a certain time to disprove or expect dismission. As there is no further record of Mr. Gerrard it is probable that he left without seeking to disprove the charges against his good name.[12]

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[11] *Colonial Records,* I, 615.

We have seen that Mr. Blair, on his return to England advised that at least two missionaries be sent to North Carolina, and that their support should be provided for in England as no dependence could be put on their getting anything in North Carolina. Following these suggestions the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent over Rev. William Gordon and Rev. James Adams. On reaching the Province in April 1708 they found four precincts on the Albemarle and three on the Pamlico, the three on the Pamlico not having a population together as large as one of the precincts on the Albemarle. They confined their labors to the Albemarle, Mr. Gordon taking charge of the precincts of Chowan and Perquimans, Mr. Adams of Pasquotank and Currituck. After a stay of three months Mr. Gordon got discouraged and returned to England, taking many pains to provide himself with testimonials of character in words so lavish in their praise that one wonders that they should be the sincere views of those whose pastoral care he is abandoning in order to seek his own personal comfort. But both he and Mr. Adams, who remained two years and five months, furnished the Society with accounts of their ministry which throw much light upon the religious condition of the people and also indicate why the ministry of these missionaries ended in failure.

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[12] *Colonial Records,* I, 616, 630.

They both strove to represent conditions as favorably as possible. The Quakers were "extremely ignorant, insufferably proud and ambitious, and consequently ungovernable," but they were numerous only in Perquimans and Pasquotank, according to Mr. Adams not being "the seventh part of the inhabitants," and according to Mr. Gordon "about one-tenth."[13] The people seemed ready to welcome the missionaries. The Vestry of Chowan promptly elected Mr. Gordon their minister, at a meeting on May 5, 1708, "in observance to a late act of Assembly." This precinct was to pay him an annual salary of thirty pounds, and actually did pay him at that rate for the time he remained in the Province. Mr. Gordon seems to have been tactful and won a hearing even in Perquimans where the Quakers were numerous. Mr. Adams found conditions much better than he had expected. Especially in Pasquotank he found that people were well behaved at religious services and showed an intelligent interest in them. This excellence was due to the training given by a Mr. Griffin, a schoolmaster, who coming from the West Indies had opened a school in Pasquotank. His school was largely patronized even by the Quakers, whose sons along with the other boys were required to go daily through the forms of worship of the Prayer Book. This Mr. Griffin had also been employed as reader by the vestry, in the absence of a minister reading the Prayer Book service on Sunday morning and also a sermon. But later going into Chowan he fell into immorality and joined the Quakers.[14] In Currituck Mr. Adams had an open field. All in all he seems to have had the heart of a true minister of Christ. He tells of his concern "for so many poor souls, scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." During his stay he baptized about 300 children, and was able to impart to his parishioners, at least to a few of them, his own pious regard for the interests of his church and respect for its sacraments. He administered the Lord's Supper three times, twice in Pasquotank where he had 14 communicants the first time, 24 the second; and once in Currituck where he had 30 communicants. But many of those who had their children baptized showed much unwillingness to have god-fathers and god-mothers. On the arrival of Gordon and Adams they had found the government under the direction of William Glover, President of the Council, who was friendly to the Establishment. But they were soon made to realize that political favor for their church in the Province was a shattered reed ready to break and pierce their hands. Mr. Gordon, as we have seen, becoming aware of the nature of the opposition left his field to look out for itself after three months. Mr. Adams remained longer. At first indeed he met with civility and encouragement; the people heard him gladly and respectfully. But as soon as they learned that his ministry was in part to be supported by taxes, to be levied by distraint if necessary, their attitude changed to one of pronounced hostility. The Quakers and with them the whole body of Dissenters were determined not to allow their own beliefs to be preached against and a State Church erected at their expense. And they made Mr. Adams feel the resentment which they felt to the Establishment. He complains that in his person he had to bear abuses and contumelies, and that he was met with reproaches, threatenings and ill usage; his services were interrupted, and the most shocking misbehaviour and blasphemy were shown by the rabble in an effort to profane the celebration of the Lord's Supper. After a stay of more than two years in the Province he declares that he has never received as much as one cent for board and lodging and must have starved but for the bounty of the Society. The Quakers and their friends were once more in charge of the government and he is anxious to leave the barbarous place in which he has "undergone a world of trouble both in body and mind." But Mr. Adams did not live to carry out his purpose. He died and was buried in Currituck. In general he deserves the encomium Hawks pays him in a tribute ending with the words, "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."[15]

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[13] *Colonial Records,* I, 686, 711. Probably Mr. Adams' detailed census of the inhabitants of Pasquotank and Currituck is inaccurate, or at least incomplete. In Pasquotank he found 1,332 souls—900 Episcopalians including a few Presbyterians, 11 of no profession, 210 Quakers, 211 negroes; in Currituck 539—97 negroes, 1 Quaker, 5 or 6 of no profession, 435 Episcopalians. In Chowan there were supposed to be no Quakers and few other Dissenters.

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[14] *Colonial Records*, I, 681, 680, 708, etc.

But we must not forget that the hostility manifested by the people of the Albemarle to the missionaries of the Church of England was not altogether without reason. The Quakers believed that the purpose of the Establishment in North Carolina was to destroy Quakerism and establish Episcopalianism in its place. They knew that such was the purpose of the Maryland law, and that those who favored the Establishment in North Carolina were ready to rob them not only of their religious rights but their civic rights as well. The first Vestry Act had been passed by the political trickery of Henderson Walker. Contrary to the known character of the Friends the promoters of the Establishment insisted on administering oaths to them as a test before allowing them to qualify as public officers. They likewise spoke of the Quakers in the harshest terms. Henderson Walker wrote of their visiting brethren as "men sent in to encourage and exhort them to their wicked principles," and declared that unless a stop were put to their growth the children born in the Province would become heathens.[16] Governor Glover, a few years later speaks of the Quakers as "malicious enemies."[17] Nor did the missionaries of the Church of England show less animosity; Mr. Blair, indeed, is content with calling them "powerful enemies to Church government, but a people very ignorant of what they profess." Mr. Gordon in his letter of May 13, 1709, to the Secretary writes at length giving a story of the activities of the Quakers in the Province and does it with a pronounced spirit of hostility, applying to them many uncomplimentary epithets.[18] Even the amiable Mr. Adams accuses the Quakers of stirring up the ignorant and irreligious by lies and calumnies against the government and himself, and also of writing scandalous lies to the Lords Proprietors to discredit any man who has incurred their displeasure. After two years of labor he feels that all friends of the Quakers are enemies to his person.[19]

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[15] *Colonial Records,* I, 681, 732, 728, 722, 714, 734, 681, 686, 719, 689.
[16] *Colonial Records,* I, 572.

Mr. Adams attributes the failure of his mission to the lack of support on the part of the Government to whom he looked for redress of grievances. If only the Government had continued as Mr. Gordon and he found it, he was certain he would have been able to give a very successful account of his labors, but now, lacking government support, he despaired of making proselytes. Looked at from our standpoint, Mr. Adams would have succeeded if he had not been in any way connected with the Government, but only a humble missionary of the Society. Furthermore, by this union of church and state was engendered that hostility to both among the people of North Carolina which culminated in the downfall of the government and the Establishment in 1776. I have made a fuller statement of this matter in my discussion of the Quakers.

During the remaining years of the Proprietary period, 1710-29, there was much turbulence in North Carolina. The Cary Rebellion with its set warfare came on in 1711, one-half the inhabitants at the throats of the other half. This was followed by the terrible Tuscarora war which began with the frightful massacre of September 22, 1711, and continued for eighteen months, while small bands of marauding Indians continued for several years longer to hover on the edges of the settlements and rob, burn and murder. At the close of the war the animosities engendered in the Cary Rebellion were renewed and the Quakers were deprived of the right to vote, hold office, give evidence in criminal cases or sit on juries. The laws were very poorly enforced. New England traders in their small vessels carried on an illegal trade in the waters of the Albemarle and the Pamlico, furnishing the planter with a few necessities and much rum in exchange for his tobacco, pork and other products, exacting extortionate profits. Pirates in their sloops frowning with guns, slipped in and out of the eastern inlets with impunity, and the most notorious of them, Blackbeard, stored his goods in the barn of Tobias Knight, secretary of the colony, and seemingly enjoyed the protection of Governor Eden. In consequence of his suspected friendship for the pirates Governor Eden became embroiled with Maurice Moore and Edward Moseley, two of the chief men of the Province. After the death of Eden in 1722 the turbulence continued under the two remaining governors of this period, George Burrington, who became Governor in 1724, and Sir Richard Everard who succeeded him in 1725. During this period also great changes were taking place in the population. Escaping from the slave labor of Virginia, great streams of the sturdy middle class were pouring into the Albemarle, while others were working their way up the Neuse, and still others were beginning settlements on the Cape Fear. Before 1730 the population of North Carolina was five times as numerous as it had been in 1710.

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[17] *Colonial Records,* I, 732.

[18] *Colonial Records,* I, 708ff.

[19] *Colonial Records,* I, 720, 733.

Late in the year 1710 and shortly after the death of Rev. James Adams, the Reverend John Urmstone came to

North Carolina as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The historian Hawks is ready to believe that it would have been much better for the colony to remain without an Episcopalian clergyman "than to have borne the infliction" of Urmstone, closing his long list of indictments against him with the words: "This missionary in twelve years, did more to retard the spread of Christianity and the growth of the Church of England in Carolina, than all other causes combined." But this is perhaps to judge too harshly.[20]

Mr. Urmstone, then a man of nearly fifty years, was married and had a family of several children, the oldest a son who had grown into manhood before 1721. His wife was a gentlewoman and seems to have been possessed of some property in her own name. The Society had probably seen fit to send a married man on the representation of Mr. Gordon that proper lodgings and conveniences were so hard to obtain in North Carolina that it was necessary "for any minister who might go over, to purchase land, buy servants, build a church, and improve a plantation, before he could live tolerably." Accordingly, Urmstone after being in Carolina seven months bought a tract of 330 acres of land in Chowan Precinct adjoining the lands of Thomas Pollock and Edward Moseley, both of them good Churchmen and prominent in the affairs of the Province. Though his ministerial labors must have interfered seriously with his management of his farm, yet by doing much of his work with his own hands Urmstone was able in his eleven years' stay in North Carolina to pay for his farm, develop it, and stock it with farm animals and servants, white and colored, and at the same time to supply his family with food, which he would not have been able otherwise to procure. Yet even this show of industry is imputed to Urmstone as a fault by Hawks.

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[20] Bishop J. B. Cheshire, Jr., gives the following estimate of Urmstone: "He was scurrillous, profane, intemperate and mendacious. He did more harm to the cause of the Church in North Carolina than any man who has ever figured in our history." *Church History in North Carolina,* p. 62.

In fact, Mr. Urmstone did have many of the weaknesses of character with which Hawks charged him. He was querimonious, all the time complaining, declaring in numerous letters that he and his family were on the verge of starvation. Furthermore, the court records reveal that he was once presented by a grand jury for being drunk, on what evidence we are not told. But it is quite unfair to him to lay to his charge the failure of the Episcopalian cause in North Carolina during the last days of the Proprietary period. In the state of society that existed in North Carolina at that time there was a call for a more evangelical religion than Episcopalianism. Furthermore in the letters of Mr. Urmstone, which form an invaluable fund of North Carolina historical material, and in other contemporary records, there is abundant evidence that many other conditions made the progress of Episcopalianism all but impossible in North Carolina.

After the year 1710 it was easy enough to pass laws favorable to the Church of England. In March, 1711, an Assembly met from which Quakers were excluded. According to Urmstone[21] it "was made up of a strange mixture of men of various opinions and inclinations—a few Churchmen, many Presbyterians, Independents, but most Anythingarians."[22] Responsive to the will of Governor Hyde these men passed an act for the Establishment. Again in 1715, during the administration of Governor Eden, a much more elaborate law was passed, setting up nine parishes and naming their vestrymen in the act, and providing severe penalties to secure its enforcement. But something more than statutes was needed to bring in the Establishment in North Corolina Carolina.

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[21] *Colonial Records,* I, 769.

[22] *Colonial Records,* I, 769. The words "most Anythingarians" evidently mean that the greater number were "Anythingarians."

The Quakers, though robbed of their civil and political rights, still exercised a powerful influence. Urmstone tells us that in Pasquotank there were many disorderly professors of the Christian religion, mutinous and rebellious, who were in alliance with the Quakers and ready at their beck to oppose church or state.[23] These zealous sectarists often called attention to the deliquencies of the missionaries sent out by the Society and sought to make them odious in the eyes even of those of their own faith.[24] The missionary, Rev. Giles Rainsford, after a few months' stay in North Carolina, in 1715, reported to the Society as his great accomplishment, that he kept some 200 from turning to Quakerism, and advised that able and sober missionaries as well as schoolmasters should be sent into North Carolina if it was not to be overrun with Quakerism and infidelity.[25] Quakerism became the bogey with which the Society was to be frightened into sending missionaries into the Province. So Governor Eden begged for missionaries for Bath Precinct because it was unprotected against the proselyting of the Quakers, and on the departure of Urmstone in 1721 he feared that the Quakers would improve the occasion to gain adherents.[26] Mr. Ebenezer Taylor, an aged missionary who spent a few months in North Carolina in 1719, felt sure that the Society would excuse him for not going to the place assigned him, but to Perquimans instead, because he hoped to put an end to the successful work of the Quakers there.[27]

Much more serious, however, than the opposition of the Quakers was the indifference of the great mass of the people, most of whom were reckoned in the number of adherents of the Church of England. They were willing enough to have a missionary of the Society baptize their children, provided that he would not insist on their having godfathers and godmothers, and provided, further, that they were not called upon for any taxes or voluntary contributions for his support. In fact since the missionary was receiving a salary from the Society in England, they felt that his services were rightfully theirs without charge, and that he ought to search out their children in their homes rather than that they should be at the inconvenience of carrying them to church for baptism.[28] They professed to share the Quaker view about "hirelings," that is, paid ministers. "This paying of money," says Urmstone,[29] "puts them quite out of humor; they cannot endure to be at charges upon what they value so little as religion."[30]

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[23] *Colonial Records,* I, 765.

[24] *Colonial Records,* II, 131.

[25] *Colonial Records,* II, 245.

[26] *Colonial Records,* II, 293, 430.

[27] *Colonial Records,* II, 333.

The vestries, too, were about as averse as the people to providing for the support of the missionary. It would seem that only a few of the nine vestries appointed by the General Assembly in 1715 ever met, while not one of those that did meet complied with the requirements of the law in supporting their minister. We have seen that the Rev. John Blair donated what salary he hoped to get to the Vestry, and that the saintly Rev. James Adams planned to leave his parish to avoid starvation. Hawks declares, with the purpose of discrediting Urmstone, that "he was perpetually quarreling with his vestries, and always about money." This is very true; the vestries had found a Tartar in Urmstone. To their surprise he insisted that they should pay him what they had agreed to pay him. They resorted to many shifts to avoid keeping their contract. They would fail to have their meetings as provided by law,[31] and when, after much difficulty the missionary had got them to meet and acknowledge their debts, and agree to pay them, the warden would fail to collect the tithes, and Urmstone would remain unpaid, or paid only in part. His frequent complaints to the Secretary finally caused the Society to address the vestries in regard to the matter,[32] and Governor Eden also, on the recommendation of the Society, lent his assistance.[33] In 1720 the Assembly passed an act requiring, under severe penalty, the vestrymen of his parish to qualify and collect and pay the one hundred and ten pounds then due their minister. Thus by keeping constantly after them Urmstone was successful in getting part of his salary from the vestries, probably less than half. In his letters to the Society he charged many times that their purpose in not paying him promptly was to cause him to leave his mission and return to England where he would be too far away to annoy him about what they owed him.[34] Nor was Urmstone alone in his complaint that the vestries failed to provide for the support of the missionaries. Blair and Adams had told similar stories. Mr. Rainsford declared that neither he nor Urmstone had ever received anything by way of contribution from the inhabitants. In consequence he was in debt and had incurred the disgrace of having his drafts protested, and was exposed to the dangers of a gaol.[35]

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[28] *Colonial Records*, II, 249.

[29] *Colonial Records*, II, 287.

[30] Urmstone has many other statements of like kind: "This lawless people will allow of no power or authority in Church or State save what is derived from them. A Proprietor, were he here, would be looked on no better than a ballad singer. What can a Government do? Or what success or order in the great design of establishing our Church can be expected by a poor, despised and contemptible missionary?" *Colonial Records*, II, 271.

[31] *Colonial Records*, II, 116, 218, 270, 248.

Their parishioners also manifested little Christian interest in their ministers. Mr. Rainsford had to make his lodgings in an old tobacco house which did not protect him from wind and rain, and his fare was fish the year through, as in a perpetual Lent.[36] Nor did Mr. Urmstone's parishioners minister largely to his comfort. On each side of him he had as neighbors men with large estates and with large households of servants, white and negroes. But neither rich nor poor did much towards helping him get a start on his farm. They left him to use hoe and axe and spade, to cut his own firewood and cultivate his own garden, for those people liked to see newcomers put to such shifts as they themselves had been put to, and looked on with much satisfaction while their missionary was doing a slavish part to attain such independence as his farm would afford him.[37] And when, after the missionary's crop had failed and a murrain had seized his cattle, he set to begging in public and private for relief, he found that he could get nothing either on the score of being their minister or on the plea of Christian charity, and many would plainly ask him why he did not labor and make corn, and declare that they saw no reason why he should not work as well as they.[38] Though he continued to work on his farm as long as he was in North Carolina, yet there seems to be some truth in the statement that he and his family often felt the pinch of hunger. Often his diet was of the coarsest fare, "a little boiled corn such as others feed their hogs with, and now and then mush, alias hasty pudding, made of Indian meal," and nothing to drink but swamp water which went down worse in winter than in summer.[39] His clothes brought from England wore out, his hat and his coat, and his clerical vestments were torn to tatters by briers and twigs in his long journeys, sometimes of more than a hundred miles in the woods. His saddle was in pieces, and he longed for a new one and a new bridle.[40] And worst of all his wife, who was a gentlewoman and would never have been called upon to endure privation had she not been a missionary's wife, had to share the hard life of her husband. After being in the Province ten years she died "of very grief and discontent not to say want," declaring before her death that "her heart was broken, through ill usage and comfortless way of living."[41]

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[32] *Colonial Records,* II, 288, 270. [33] *Colonial Records,* II, 271, 227f.

[34] "They wonder that I do not leave the country and their debt would be paid; that is the way they have treated all of my function before me, and would have the world believe they are no changelings." *Colonial Records,* II, 279. Urmstone makes similar statements in other letters. *Colonial Records,* II, 248, 218.

[35] *Colonial Records,* II, 122. [36] *Colonial Records,* II, 123, 55.

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[37] *Colonial Records,* I, 764.

[38] *Colonial Records,* II, 126.

[39] *Colonial Records,* II, 310, 248. "If I had not with the utmost slavery made a little corn, we should have all perished; I've not a morsel of anything save corn." *Colonial Records,* II, 176.

[40] "I have not a gown to my back nor hat to my head nor indeed any other decent apparel. I am in great want of a good and large rug and quilt, pair of large blankets, with a good ticking for a bed bolster and pillows—with an easy saddle and curb." *Colonial Records,* II, 272.

Nor did the people of the Province, not even the Churchmen in those precincts where the vestries were organized and most active, show any proper interest in religion. We are told that churches were begun in the precincts of Chowan, Perquimans and Pasquotank, those in the latter two precincts not having been finished. In Chowan Precinct, following the advice of Mr. Gordon, the vestry began the construction of a new and larger church, but seem never to have finished it. It had no floor, for seats only a few loose benches on the sand, and as the key had been lost and the door stood open, the hogs and cattle fled to it for shade in summer and warmth in winter, making it loathsome with their dung and nastiness, the hogs digging the floor into holes and making their beds there. Well might the missionary declare that not much was to be expected of a vestry who showed no more regard for their church, and who passed the rum bottle around while he was trying to teach them their duties.[42]

The parishioners likewise failed to manifest any proper interest in the services of the church. During the most of the time Urmstone was in the Province he was the only minister and had the entire colony under his care, but his services were usually confined to the Albemarle precincts, and for the most part to Chowan. Sometimes after traveling over rivers and through swamps many miles to fill an appointment he would find not a soul at the services, but the people gone to a wheat-thrashing or some like party, anything to avoid coming to the service. Hearing of a destitute section on the Alligator river where there were forty or fifty families who had never seen the face of a minister of the Gospel he offered to go there, but he heard no more of it. He had a like experience with a community near the Virginia line. But even in his home precinct of Chowan Urmstone went seven times in one winter to the church and found no congregation.[43] Possibly the main reason for their failing to attend the services was they thought thus to avoid paying anything for the minister's support. "They had rather never come to church than be obliged to pay me anything," Urmstone declared, with much show of truth, and said that it was "all one with them whether they have a minister and church to go to or not," and again, "governors and ministers here are generally accounted useless, burdensome, and even enemies to the country."[44] Mr. Rainsford declared that when the faithful minister told them of their faults they would absent themselves from his service and therefore he believed they were wholly undeserving of a missionary.[45] And Mr. Urmstone expressed the same opinion to Colonel Nicholson whose offer of furnishing the colony with ministers and schoolmasters Urmstone had laid before seven of the vestries. "I know not," said he, "how quick they may be in complying with your commands. I am not apt to believe that they will be overforward, such slow bellies to all that concerns soul's health; most here had rather be without them. I am sure they are not worthy of any, and were their usage of me known, I am persuaded none would be so mad as ever to come among them. They'll neither pay minister nor schoolmaster; nay, they had need to be hired to go to church or send their children to school. . . . I find them more prone to take from us by fraud and extortion what we bring with us, and seem unwilling that we should live, though at our own cost, by them."[46]

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[41] *Colonial Records,* II, 371, 374. "She prest me sore for divers years either to quit this wretched country or give her leave to go home with her children. I wish I had done either."

[42] *Colonial Records,* I, 770.

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[43] *Colonial Records*, II, 279.

[44] *Colonial Records*, II, 288, 260, 279.

[45] "I don't see how the country any way deserves a missionary among them, for behave yourself with the greatest caution and reserve, and shew the fairest example of a Christian life, yet notwithstanding they'll traduce, slander and belie you, and if you seriously tell them of their faults they'll not only absent themselves from divine service but as much as in them lies hinder others from the performance of what God and religion require at their hands." *Colonial Records*, II, 123.

There are some other indications of general religious conditions of the inhabitants of North Carolina at this time. One of these is the attitude of the planters towards the work of the missionaries among their slaves. Rev. Mr. Taylor in a letter to the Society under date of April 23, 1719, said that many slaves in the Province were ready to be baptized and would be were it not for the wickedness of their masters who opposed their conversion, baptism and salvation, because they believed, wrongly, all slaves baptized would be set free. He had already baptized two slaves and had three or four more instructed and ready for baptism when the report about their being set free on baptism became current. The slaves already baptized belonged to Esquire Duckenfield, a prominent Churchman, a warden of his vestry, whose house had served Mr. Taylor for a church, and whom Hawks names among those "worthy of remembrance by North Carolina Episcopalians of this day, for their efforts to promote the prosperity of the Church." But this same Esquire Duckenfield becoming alarmed about the freeing of his slaves plainly told Mr. Taylor that he should baptize no more of them until the Society got a law passed in England that no baptized slaves should be set free. There were many others of the same mind as Duckenfield. "And so," said Mr. Taylor, "this good work was knocked in the head which is a great trouble to me, because so many slaves are desirous of becoming Christians without any expectation of being set free when they are baptized."[47]

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[46] *Colonial Records,* II, 126. Mr. Urmstone was sued four or five times for debt while he was in the Province, three times by one who later became church warden of the Chowan precinct, whose claim he checkmated in fine style by presenting to him in payment his bill against the vestry. *Colonial Records,* II, 294. It is probable that Urmstone had this same church warden chiefly in mind in the following statement: "My kind parishioners are in hopes that I must fly, and then their debt for nigh six years is paid, whilst one is gaping after my plantation, another my servants and stock at their own price." *Colonial Records,* II, 272.

Another indication of the religious spirit was the reluctance of the people to join in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The first celebration in the province was on Trinity Sunday, 1706, when the Reverend Richard Marsden waiting in North Carolina for passage to South Carolina, finding a few Christians trained by the schoolmaster Griffin, thought it convenient to administer the sacrament. We have seen above that Mr. Adams administered it three times to small groups of communicants. Mr. Urmstone administered it rather frequently in the early years of his ministry, once to the members of the General Assembly. But in the later years of his mission he administered it only twice in five years, attributing the falling off to the growing indifference of the people. And that the fault of this falling off is not to be imputed altogether to Mr. Urmstone may be inferred from the failure of Mr. Taylor to get together a sufficient number of communicants at any of the several times that he purposed to administer the Supper. "The people here," he says with a sigh, "are so little inclined to receive it, which is one thing makes me very weary of living in this place."[48]

This Mr. Taylor, a pious, good man, was aged and hardly able physically to travel. After somewhat more than a year in the Province he was probably foully murdered for the money he carried on his person. He was at that time laboring at Bath. He started on a visit to Core Sound, in his own boat and with his own crew, who seem to have put him ashore on Harbor Island and there to have killed him.

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[47] *Colonial Records,* I, 332f.

[48] *Colonial Records,* II, 331. "When I gave notice of my intentions to administer Holy Communion on Easter Day, a few Lord's Days before, a considerable person, after the public worship of God was ended, said to me, 'Now Mr. Taylor is going to damn his parishioners.' I suppose that he said this because he thought that they that would receive were very unfit for it, and would eat and drink unworthily and so eat and drink damnation to themselves. And I must confess it, the people here generally and almost all of them are very ignorant and very irreligious and very worldly wicked, and do very little desire to be better informed."

We have seen that Mr. Rainsford remained in the Province only a few months. Governor Glover declared that he deserved nothing for his services here, but though he had human weaknesses, he would probably have succeeded under more favorable circumstances. After the departure of Urmstone the Society on the solicitation of Governor Eden sent Rev. Mr. Newman to North Carolina, but after six months of faithful and industrious ministry, in which he had visited the remotest parts of the Province he fell sick and died.[49] For several years the Province was without a clergyman of the Church of England. It was not until the beginning of the administration of Sir Richard Everard as Governor, in 1725, that the Society sent its next missionary, the Rev. Mr. Blacknall. About all that is known of him is that in seeming ignorance of the provincial law he united a white man in marriage to a mulatto woman, thereby incurring a penalty of fifty pounds. Becoming an informer on himself he saved one-half of this. Before Mr. Blacknall left the Province it was visited by another minister of the Church of England, the Rev. Thos. Bailey, who was not, however, sent as a missionary of the Society. This Mr. Bailey had the favor of former Governor Burrington, while Blacknall had the support of Everard. So we are not surprised to find Bailey described by Everard as "scandalous drunken man," while the friends of Burrington call him their "pious and exemplary minister."[50] After a few months of public quarrels and brawls between these rival ministers and their friends in and around Edenton, Mr. Bailey withdrew to Bath, where he stayed for two or three years. But the notoriety of the factious squabbles at Edenton remained. Readers will give their sympathy to the Episcopalian historian when in speaking of these disgraceful proceedings he says:

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[49] Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* II, 353f.

[50] *Colonial Records,* II, 604, 624.

> It is a bad story at the best. The Church had enough to contend with in the hostility of the Quakers, the disaffection of her merely nominal members, and the open assaults of the enemies of all godliness; it is sad to think that the last glimpse we get of her in public, during the proprietary times, shows her as a helpless victim, dragged into an unnatural association with the dirty strifes of still dirtier parties; mixed up with the lawless deeds of clamorous and drunken partisans, and amid the curses and the shouts of a godless and triumphant rabble, escorted through doors broken down, to be represented by the ministrations of a man whom one half of the community pretended, for the time, to consider an oracle, while the other half believed he was a drunkard. Religion and the Church of Christ could not but suffer from such forced and unhallowed associations.[51]

We should like to believe with Hawks that the people were made better as a result of the labors of the missionaries. Readers were, indeed, provided in several of the parishes, and in this way regular meetings were not altogether given up.[52] Doubtless in all of these precincts there were some respectable citizens who were unwilling that their children should grow up in irreligion and did what they could to promote an interest in the church. This was notably true of the Bath precinct where lived Chief Justice Gale. But in view of the conditions which I have outlined above from the contemporary documents I think it can hardly be denied that at the close of the Proprietary period, after a quarter of a century of effort to establish the Church of England in North Carolina, and the sending here of a dozen missionaries of that Church, the Province was religiously and morally bankrupt. But another type of preacher was soon to call the people to repentance.

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[51] Hawks, *History of North Carolina,* II, 355.

[52] "In most of the parishes they have already established two or three readers who are the most capable persons we can get here. To some they allow pr. annum thirty pounds. To others twenty pounds and to none less than ten pounds." Letter of Governor Eden, *Colonial Records,* II, 228.

## VIII

# THE GENERAL BAPTISTS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Having traced the work and influence of the Quakers and the Church of England in North Carolina during the Proprietary period, I next turn to tell of the rise of the Baptists.

The Baptist historian, Morgan Edwards,[1] who traveled in North Carolina in 1771-72, left a manuscript history of the Baptists of North Carolina, in which he says that there had been Baptists in North Carolina since the first settlement, which he supposed to have been in 1695. His words are: "In this wretched Province there have been some Baptists since the settlement in 1695." In some way Edwards had been misled as to the date of the settlement, which was full forty years before, but it is evident that he had been told and believed that some of the first settlers were Baptists, and that there had been some Baptists among the inhabitants in all the years before the establishment of the first Baptist church in 1727.[2] This is just what we have been led to expect by the accounts of the persecutions of Baptists in England and in many of the American colonies from the time of the settlement for the next half century. It is beyond reason to suppose that the persecuted Baptists who at the time of the Restoration were the largest group of Dissenters in England should have been so ready to take refuge in South Carolina and Pennsylvania but should have carefully avoided North Carolina.[3]

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[1] Edwards was a native of Wales and had come to Philadelphia in 1761 as pastor of the Baptist church in that city. In 1770 he resigned his pastorate and devoted his time during the next two years in gathering materials for a history of the Baptists of all America, traveling through the colonies and gathering such information as he could from church books and such other documents. This information he carefully and neatly set down in notebooks, one for each colony, most of which are now to be found in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society at Chester, Pennsylvania. In 1877, Mr. J. C. Birdsong copied the notebook for North Carolina for the North Carolina State Library; this has been reproduced in several copies, two of which are in the Wake Forest College Library. But later Mr. Edwards expanded his note books into a fuller account, making a volume for each State, which he called *Materials,* etc. The volume for Pennsylvania was published in 1770; that for New Jersey in 1794. The others remain unpublished. The volumes for Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina are now in the possession of Mr. A. G. Furman of Greenville, South Carolina. In 1877 a copy of all was made by a Mr. Clopton. This copy is now in the library of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky. The volume for North Carolina has been published in the *North Carolina Historical Review* for July, 1900, with notes by G. W. Paschal. Typed copies of the other volumes are to be found in the Library of Wake Forest College.

Knight, the historian of the General Baptists, says that there were Baptist churches in the Kehukee Region, that is, the region of the Kehukee Association, from 1690, and that the societies there and those of Virginia had formed themselves into a yearly meeting as early as 1720. Knight gives no authority for his statements, but he seems to have been led to believe that the yearly meeting had been established as early as 1720 by a letter of Paul Palmer to Rev. John Comer of Rhode Island, written in 1729. That this statement is nothing more than an inference is proved by the fact that Benedict who had seen Palmer's letter gives no exact date.[4]

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[2] This statement of Edwards' led Benedict into the error of supposing that 1695 was the year in which Baptists were first found in the Province, whereas Edwards was only trying to date the settlement. Benedict's error has been continued by other writers on Baptist history.

[3] In 1682 there were migrations of "respectable Dissenters," including many Baptists, from Somersetshire to South Carolina; in 1693 another group, "mostly Baptists," under the patronage of Lord Cardross, came to the Port Royal section of that Province. Newman, *Baptist History in the United States,* p. 222f. Baptists began to come in considerable numbers to Pennsylvania almost as soon as it was opened to colonization in 1682. The period in which persecution was severest in England continued only until 1688, but during those years had come many Baptists, among them the celebrated church of Welsh Baptists in 1686, some of whom later moving to South Carolina gave their name to the Welsh Neck District. Spencer, *Early Baptists of Philadelphia,* pp. 17-38.

As these General Baptists of Virginia were subsequently so closely connected with those of North Carolina I give some account of them here. According to Knight,[5] a number of General Baptists had come from England and settled in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, as early as 1700. They had brought no preacher with them, but some years later appealed to their brethren in London to send them ministers. In response to their request their London brethren ordained Thomas White and Robert Nordin and sent them forth; but as White died in passage only Nordin reached Virginia. In 1714, he organized the Isle of Wight Baptists into a church at Burley, opposite Jamestown. Semple's account,[6] following Backus and Leland, is in practical agreement with this, but contains the additional details that "Nordin organized a church in Prince George County, and held meetings there and in other places until he died, December 1, 1725."

According to Morgan Edwards all these churches passed out of existence very early, as Semple thinks, soon after 1756, as a consequence of removals to North Carolina and divisions in the membership. Their last minister was Mr. Richard Jones, of whom Paul Palmer wrote in his letter to Comer quoted in the note above. He had been ordained in 1727, and in 1729 was spoken of by Palmer as "a very sensible old gentleman." It is not probable that Palmer's association with him had begun much before this time, or that any North Carolina church other than those that Palmer organized in 1727 and later had joined the Virginia Yearly Meeting.

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[4] In this letter, used by Benedict, Vol. II, p. 24, Palmer seems to have made no reference to churches in North Carolina, although he did tell something of the General Baptist churches of Virginia. Respecting these churches, says Benedict, Mr. Palmer wrote as follows: "There is a comely little church in the Isle of Wight County, of about thirty or forty members, the Elder of which is one Richard Jones, a very sensible old gentleman, whom I have great love for. We see each other at every Yearly Meeting, and sometimes more often. There is another church in Surry County, where my brother Jones lives, I suppose of about thirty more."

[5] *General Baptists,* p. 316ff.

[6] *Virginia Baptists,* Chapter XXXII.

These yearly meetings continued among the General Baptist churches of this region until the organization of the Kehukee Association in 1769. They were much of the nature of the Associations of the Primitive Baptists of today. Only business of a general character was transacted. It consisted largely of informal reports of the work of the various ministers. They were social religious meetings to which not only the ministers but others interested in the work, both church members and non-church members, came in great numbers. The public exercises continued for two or three days and were given up almost entirely to preaching, the sermons being delivered, several in a day, by the various ministers present and listened to with untiring interest. In our time, blessed as we are with numerous ministers, we can hardly understand the gospel-hunger of these destitute people. Near their homes they heard a preacher rarely. They had no newspapers, no religious periodicals, no Bibles or other books.[7] At these yearly meetings, then, they were ready to sit day after day, giving earnest attention as the preacher broke unto them the bread of life. Thus these early colonial Baptists after spending a few days in pious conversation and becoming acquainted with the progress of the work as far as their traveling preachers had gone, and having been instructed and inspirited by the sermons, returned home with a new enthusiasm for the growth of the gospel in their own hearts and in the hearts of others.

There is some evidence also that there were meetings of Dissenters in North Carolina before 1690. Soon after the death of Charles the Second, which occurred in 1685, and presumably before the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689 the Albemarle Assembly passed an Act, "That all and every person professing ye Christian Religion in this Government shall from time to time have & enjoy his & their judgments and consciences in Matters of Religion and have liberty to assemble and meet together."[8]

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[7] The missionaries of the Church of England deplored the lack of Bibles. It was difficult to procure them even for the churches.

It is probable that this Act was due to the influence of Archdale, the Quaker Proprietor and Governor, who is known to have been in the Province in 1686, but it would seem that it contemplates not only Quakers, who had long been holding their meetings, but other Dissenters, among whom were doubtless some Baptists.

A statement by Rev. John Blair, who as we have seen was in North Carolina in 1704 as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, has been thought by some to indicate the presence of Baptists in the colony in considerable numbers. We have seen that, in classifying the inhabitants religiously, he said: "A third sort are something like Presbyterians, which sort is upheld by some idle fellows who have left their lawful employment, and preach and baptize through the country, without any manners of orders from any sect or pretended Church." Dr. Hufham supposed that Blair had Baptists in mind, Dr. Hawks Independents. Blair's evident purpose is to include all classes of Dissenters except Quakers and the few Churchmen. At the largest they were no great number, for the inhabitants numbered only five or six thousand. It is clear that they had no church buildings, no organizations; the preachers were self-appointed, and found time to preach in the intervals of their farming, which at this time was practically the only "lawful employment," and preach in such a manner as to gain the support of the colonists. The fact that they are said to baptize without further qualification would suggest that these preachers were something else than Baptists. It may occasion surprise that they should have baptized at all, since they were without ordination. It can easily be seen, however, that by this time, in the lack of regular ministers the inhabitants would have become irregular in their religious views and practices, "anythingarians," as John Urmstone somewhat later called them. Following the custom of the time both in England and the colonies, the meetings were held in the dwelling houses or, if the weather was fine and the congregation large, under the shade of trees.[9] At any rate, we are glad to have evidence that there was, in addition to the Quakers, among these settlers a considerable number who in the general destitution sought to promote religion and to provide religious instruction.

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[8] *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register,* III, 59. (Original in the Court House at Edenton). The preamble reads as follows: "Whereas our late Sovereign Ld King Charles ye 2d by his letters patent bearing date——— &c. hath been graciously pleased amongst many other powers privileges and authorities in ye sd Letters patents contained to give and grant unto ye Lords proprietors of Carolina free Lycence Liberty and Authority by Such Wayes & Means as they shall think fit to give & grant unto all psons inhabiting in ye sd province of Carolina and dissenting from ye Church of England Such indulgencies or dispensations in Matters of Religion, as they ye sd Lds proprietors think fit & resonable,

"Be it therefore Enacted &c."

The editor tells us that this paper, while without date, was an exact copy of the original, and was passed shortly after the death of Charles II.

Such meetings of Dissenters seem to have continued sporadically till the end of the Proprietary period and later. They were specifically provided for in a section of the Liberty of Conscience Act of 1715, "that all Protestant Dissenters within this Government shall have their meetings for the exercise of their religion without molestation, provided that the same be public," etc., a restatement in somewhat more liberal terms of a provision of the Toleration Act of Parliament in 1789.

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[9] In 1739, the preaching places of Rev. John Holmes, a missionary of the Church of England, were as follows: "At the houses of Joseph Sims, Henry Jones, Henry Walker, Capt. Joseph Lane, Bertie Court House, Mr. Maney's chapel, (houses of Wm. Arrington and Philip Thomas) for a Salary of £200." Hathaway, *Historical and Genealogical Register,* II, 303. The Rev. Giles Rainsford preached in the shade of a mulberry tree. *Colonial Records,* II. Clement Hall tells of preaching under the shade of trees, because the congregations were too large for houses. *Colonial Records,* IV, 1315; VI, 567. Dr. Hufham has the following interesting conjecture as to the nature of these services of the Dissenters: "These gatherings in the houses of the neighborhood, 'cottage churches,' we may call them, formed an important element in the religious life of the colony at that period, and they have continued among Baptists in poor and sparsely settled districts unto our time. There was a social element in them which was very attractive, and they were free from interruption from the outside and from any indecorum on the part of those who attended. If a minister was present he preached, of course. In the absence of a minister any brother might speak, and, after a period, a printed sermon was read, if no one would speak. But there was always religious conversation with singing and prayer." *Baptist Historical Papers,* I, 163.

But although these meetings were held during this period there is no evidence of any organized group of worshipers nor of any church building except those of Quakers and the Church of England. Knight was probably mistaken if he meant to imply the existence of organized Baptist churches in North Carolina as early as 1690. There is nothing in contemporary records to justify the supposition that any such church existed before 1727.

The most probable reason why Mr. Blair did not mention Baptists is that at this time they had no organized churches. Likewise Rev. James Adams says nothing of Baptists in his report in 1709, though he mentions, in his faulty census, adherents of the Church of England, Quakers, Presbyterians, and a few who profess no religion. Rev. William Gordon also says nothing of Baptists in his relation of religious conditions in the Province. Nor is there before 1729 any mention of Baptists in any of the many letters of the several Presidents of Council and Governors to the Bishop of London, though they all discuss religious affairs very fully and often refer to the Quakers. And nothing is said of a Baptist church in the voluminous letters of the Rev. John Urmstone who remained in the Province from 1710 to 1721, nor in those of Rev. Giles Rainsford nor any other preacher of the Church of England during the Proprietary Period. On the other hand, Mr. Gordon in 1709 says in his rather superficial survey that there were few or no Dissenters in the government except Quakers, while Governor Eden in 1721 thought that Quakers were the "only sort of Dissenters worth minding in the government."[10]

It is hardly possible then that there was any regularly organized congregation of Baptists in the Province or any Baptist preacher before Paul Palmer. Neither church nor preacher, if they had been here, could easily have escaped notice in the small population of that time; the peculiar tenets and practices of the Baptists and the evangelical appeal of the Baptist preachers would have excited no little commotion among the people as well as comment by all who spoke on the religious affairs of the Province, just as was caused a few years later by the preaching of Paul Palmer.

But, as I have said, there were doubtless some Baptists among the people all along, and enough others who shared the Baptist views of liberty of conscience to frustrate the efforts for a successful Establishment. With the lapse of years, being without teachers and preachers to instruct them, and without churches to give them common purpose, whatever Baptist families came to the Province, would, in the second generation, amid the constant change of the colonial population have almost forgot that they were Baptists, even though they retained the proper tenets of the the Baptist faith, such as opposition to sacramentalism, the belief in the equality of all before God, the necessity for regeneration, and opposition to any union of Church and State, such as was proposed by those who worked for the Establishment in the Province. So long as the Quakers, who were not more than one-seventh of the population, formed the necessary nucleus of an organization and had their full political rights, these other Dissenters were present in sufficient numbers, when united with the Quakers, to control political affairs.

The first contemporary record of the presence of Baptists in the Province bears the date of June 12, 1714. In a letter written on that day Rev. John Urmstone complained that two of his vestrymen in the Chowan Precinct were "professed Anabaptists," a name by which Baptists were still called.[11] That in this stronghold of the Church of England two of the vestrymen should have been Baptists is sufficient proof that they were men of property, prominence, and influence. They had probably come into the Province several years before in that great tide of immigrants from Virginia which continued in increasing volume through the first quarter of the eighteenth century and a few years later brought a thousand a year to North Carolina.[12]

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[10] *Colonial Records,* II, 430.

Again, on May 2, 1718, Urmstone wrote: "I have been in Currituck where I baptized 35 children and the mother of one of them: she hath three sisters and two brethren, all adults, the sons and daughters of an Anabaptist, who pretends to be a physician, fortune-teller, and conjuror; always chosen Burgess for that precinct and a leading man in our Assemblies, a fit man you will say for a vestryman, but we have too many such in other vestries, whence it is we find so little favor among them."[13]

These statements of Urmstone show that Baptists were not rare at this time and that there were some men of influence among them, even in precincts like Chowan and Currituck, where Episcopalians were most numerous and powerful.

About the time that Urmstone left North Carolina the name of Paul Palmer was beginning to appear in the colonial documents, the earliest mention being in the court records for April 3, 1720. As he is justly regarded the founder of the first Baptist church in North Carolina we should like to know more of him than our meagre records supply. But by piecing together the scraps of information found here and there we get a much more complete picture of his life than once seemed possible.

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[11] *Colonial Records,* II, 131.
[12] *Colonial Records,* III, 28. Governor Burrington's statement.
[13] *Colonial Records,* II, 304.

From Benedict we learn that Paul Palmer was a native of Maryland; that he was baptized at Welsh Tract, in Delaware, by Owen Thomas, the pastor of the church at that place; that he was ordained in Connecticut; was some time in New Jersey, and then in Maryland; that his last work was in North Carolina.

It is not clear why Palmer went to Connecticut for ordination, nor have I found any account of his work in New Jersey. In Maryland, according to Morgan Edwards and Benedict, he preached at the house of Henry Sator, a Baptist layman, who had come from England in 1709, and baptized nine persons; from this congregation in 1742 was organized the first Baptist church in Maryland, that of Chestnut Ridge. Palmer's reasons for coming to North Carolina are likewise unknown; possibly he hoped to better his temporal circumstances; possibly he came under a missionary impulse. We find him in 1720 settled in Perquimans Precinct, where, as shown by the records of the year 1735, he had in 1729 an estate of 964 acres.[14] But before April, 1720, he had married Johanna, the daughter of Juliana Laker of Perquimans[15] and the widow of Thomas Peterson, who died about the close of the year 1714. This Thomas Peterson was one of the most prominent men in the Province at that time. He was vestryman and church warden and had charge of the standards of weights and measures in St. Paul's Parish, Chowan Precinct. In this capacity he had entered suit against Edward Moseley for money entrusted to him by Governor Nicholson of Virginia to buy a communion service. He was one of the commissioners on the conduct of the Tuscarora War, and had from his private stock furnished guns for the soldiers.

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[14] *State Records,* XXII, 411.

[15] Grimes, *N. C. Wills,* p. 206; Hathaway, *Hist. and Geneologial Register,* III, 284.

He was a member of the Governor's Council. He had a plantation of about five hundred acres covering the present site of the town of Edenton, and before his death had given one hundred acres of it for the laying out of the town. When he died he left his wife Johanna and one child, a daughter named Anne, "an infant." By special Act of the Assembly of 1715 the widow was empowered to sell the remaining four hundred acres of her husband's land and to keep the proceeds of the sale in trust for her daughter until her marriage or until she became eighteen years of age, the Act providing that the widow's land in Perquimans, 170 acres on Castleton's or Laker's creek, adjoining the lands of Juliana Laker and Richard Skinner, should be surety for the trust. In 1722 the land was still unsold. In the meantime Paul Palmer had married Johanna, and leased the land to James Palin of Boston, the lease to expire December 25, 1722, with privilege of renewal.[16] At the session of the Assembly in 1722, however, the former widow, Johanna, asked the Assembly to take the land fixing the price, which it agreed to do, allowing her two hundred and fifty pounds for the land and fifty pounds for the improvements made thereon. This entailed a lawsuit, as Palin desired to continue his lease.

Thus Paul Palmer on coming to the Province, had married into one of its richest and most respectable families, but just how early after 1715 we do not know. He and his wife and her young daughter had soon moved to Perquimans and settled on the lands of his wife, where he seems to have acquired additional lands of his own. At any rate in a few years he had much larger land holdings. As appears from the will of Mrs. Julian Laker, which was probated in Perquimans Court in January, 1739, two children were born to Paul Palmer and his wife Johanna, a daughter named Martha and a son named Samuel, the latter probably being the Samuel Palmer whose death on December 4, 1739, is recorded in the Perquimans County records. Less probably he is to be identified with the Samuel Palmer who on June 27, 1776, was commissioned second mate of the privateer schooner *Johnston*, "to act against the enemies of the thirteen United Colonies." Of Martha nothing more is known.

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[16] *N. C. Historical and Genealogical Register,* III, 284.

It was after his removal to Perquimans that he and his wife, who as the sequel will show, was a very spirited woman, were brought into court under an indictment for aiding and abetting in the stealing of a negro belonging to Nicholas Crisp, Gentleman, a fellow member of the vestry with her former husband, after whose death Crisp had been appointed by the vestry to "demand" of the widow the standards of weights and measures which her husband had left. Either because the demanding was not very gently done or for some other reason the relations between Johanna and Crisp seem to have been far from friendly. Out of this unfriendliness grew the fiasco of an indictment of which I shall proceed to relate the details.

On April 3, 1720, a negro slave named Cush, or Quashy belonging to the Palmers, went to the plantation of Mr. Crisp and brought away a negro slave named Sambo and his equipment consisting of a new rug (bed spread), one coat, one shirt, one pair of new leather breeches, one pair of stockings, one pair of new shoes and one hat, value one pound, twelve shillings, sixpence, and carried all to Mr. Palmer's. Tradition says that Cush went in broad daylight in a two-horse wagon and that there was no effort at concealment. Indeed, it is very hard to see how without previous arrangement with the master Sambo could have been taken away from the place at all.

Eleven days thereafter, on April 14, the Honorable Frederick Jones, Chief Justice of North Carolina, issued a warrant for Cush, and instructed the constable who was to serve it to bring along Sambo also and his goods. After waiting until April 23 the constable, Charles Wilkins, served the warrant, and already had Cush and Sambo in his custody, when Mrs. Palmer appeared, and by "force and arms, against the will of the said Charles Wilkins, constable, took and rescued the said negro Sambo, and let him run away, in great contempt of our said Sovereign Lord the King, and in evil and pernicious example to others."[17]

Sambo probably took to the swamp, but at the next term of the General Court at Edenton, July-August, 1720, the grand jury found true bills against Cush for feloniously stealing Sambo and his goods, against Mr. Palmer and his wife for feloniously receiving Sambo and the goods, and a second bill against Mr. Palmer for a misdemeanor in instigating and commanding Cush to steal Sambo, and a second bill against Mrs. Palmer for a misdemeanor in rescuing Sambo from the hands of the constable.

So far as the records show the case against Cush, the principal offender, was never prosecuted; he was neither brought into court nor required to give bond. Mr. Palmer, though at first refusing, finally gave bail to appear at the next court, his bondsmen being Thomas Luten and Wm. Stewart. Mrs. Palmer was not present but a venire was issued for her appearance at the next court.[18]

Being brought in custody before the court at its next term in April, 1721, Mr. Palmer and his wife refusing to plead were ordered to be kept in custody until they should plead, but their case was not brought before the court again until the next term, in July-August, 1721. Then Mr. Palmer was brought to trial on the charge of instigating Cush to steal Sambo and was found guilty of a misdemeanor. Mr. Palmer, of course, was not able to deny his instructions to Cush but probably because no proof had been offered that Cush stole Sambo, the court allowed Mr. Palmer to file a bill of errors. Then the case against Mr. Palmer and his wife was brought before court. "But the Attorney General having absconded and refusing to plead," the case was ordered to be referred to the next court. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer again gave bail, their bondsmen being Joseph Jessop and John Pettiver. At the next court, October, 1721, their cases were further postponed, probably because no witness appeared against them. Finally at the term of the court in March-April, 1722, they were again brought to trial. But, no witnesses appearing, the case against them was dismissed. The collapse of this case involved that of the charge of misdemeanor also which Mr. Palmer had appealed, and this was thrown out of court with the consent of the Attorney General, Daniel Richardson.[19]

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[17] *Colonial Records*, II, 410f.

[18] *Colonial Records*, II, 416.

Neither Mrs. Palmer nor Mr. Palmer lost anything in popular favor or reputation on account of this trial. It was during this same year that the Assembly by a second special Act on the matter took over the lands of Mrs. Palmer's daughter Anne. A year later the Assembly named Mr. Palmer on the permanent jury list of Perquimans Precinct. In October, 1725, Mr. Palmer served on the grand jury in the same General Court at Edenton in which he had been able to maintain his innocence three years before. There is evidence, however, that he was still annoyed by frivolous prosecutions. In June, 1726, a case came up from the inferior court of Perquimans in some matter of difference between Mr. Palmer and one Samuel Phelps, in which the General Court exonerated Mr. Palmer.[20]

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[19] *Colonial Records,* II, 443ff., 471.

[20] *Colonial Reords,* II, 596, 660. In 1912, Colonel W. B. Shaw of Henderson, N. C., an able lawyer, at the request of Dr. Hufham made a careful study of the prosecution of Mr. Palmer, and gave his impression in a paper from which I quote several sections:

"These were all serious charges and if the first was true, it would have disgraced Palmer and his wife as common felons.

"But does the record bear a semblance of guilt? If so, I have been unable to discover it. In the face of the vilest charges, the law presumes

Palmer had been several years in the Province before he attracted attention by his preaching. Governor Eden, whose famous Governor's House was in Chowan and who must have known Palmer and his wife, still believed in 1721

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the innocence of those charged with crime, and it devolved upon the Crown to show the guilt by proper and convincing proof; the burden was on Crisp, who was an interested prosecutor, to make his charges good, but he failed to do so or even try to do it.

"The record discloses the fact, that at July term, 1720, presentments were made by Crisp and at November term, 1720, this same Crisp was foreman of the grand jury, and that said jury was, for some unrevealed cause, discharged and another grand jury empaneled, which jury found the three bills in question; and at the same time the defendants entered into recognizance to appear at July term, 1721. At this term Paul Palmer was convicted of the misdemeanor charged in the second bill, and moved in arrest of judgment and the case was continued to November term, 1721, for him to file his bill of errors; also were the other cases continued because Crisp was called and failed to appear and give evidence against defendants. At this term the Attorney General again failed to prosecute for want of evidence, and the three cases were continued to April term, 1722, when the Attorney General in open court confessed he had no evidence upon which to ask for a conviction, and all three cases were discharged without day.

"This is all the record discloses, and nothing else appearing, I am led to conclude that the prosecution was frivolous.

"The record shows Crisp to have been a man of great prominence; he was a Captain in high favor with the Crown officers, and must have been a vestryman. If his charges were true, he had sustained great financial loss in his slave Sambo and his leather breeches; and whatever may have been the standing of Palmer, self-interest and self-respect required him to make good his charges. I assume that Crisp was high in church and state, and apart from personal interest, he was bound to uphold the dignity of the Crown, and use his best efforts to bring felons to condemnation, but, strange to say, the records do not show that he ever appeared in the court-house again after making the charges as long as they were on the docket, though he was called at three separate terms, to make his charges good. Why he did not prosecute the cases must be left largely to conjecture. The legal inference is that he could not and that the charges were false if not malicious.

"Another fact discloses the animus of the prosecution, in that the negro Quashy was never called to answer the bill of indictment found against him though he was the principal actor in the larceny alleged.

"Another significant fact that perhaps fixes the falsity of the charges is, the Attorney General, whose duty it was to prosecute all offenders of the law, especially all felons, term after term absconded when those cases were called by the Court for trial, and finally went into court and confessed he had no evidence and dismissed the cases. Would he have done so by collusion with Paul Palmer who was to him a despised heretic? On the other hand, would he not have been zealous for the prosecution? The tenure of his office perhaps largely depended upon his faithful discharge of his official duties.

"These facts lead to the reasonable conclusion that there was no evidence to sustain the charges, and he was compelled, from a sense of honor, to that the Quakers were the "only sort of dissenters worth minding." As late as January 25, 1726, Governor Everard, writing from Edenton, bewailed the fact that North Carolina was the most heathenish part of America with no sect but the Quakers. If Palmer had long been preaching with the extraordinary evangelizing and proselyting zeal which Everard noted a few years later it is hard to see how he failed to attract the attention of the Governor who was almost his neighbor.

But in 1726 Palmer was probably already engaged in his evangelistic labors, having been stimulated by the influence of the Yearly Meetings which he was attending as noted above. The first field of his activities was in the part of Chowan County north of Poplar Run and extending to Warwick Swamp on the present boundary of Gates County. In 1726 he was already interested in this section. In that year he sold to Charles Jordan the son of John Jordan, who was one of the members of the church gathered in the immediate neighborhood north of Poplar Run the next year, a tract of land containing thirty-four acres, adjoining the lands of his father John Jordan and John Parker, another member of Palmer's first church. On March 7, 1727, Palmer joined with John Jordan in witnessing the signature of Nathan Miers and wife Mary to a deed conveying 100 acres "on the north side of Poplar Run," to John Welch, still another member of the first Baptist church in North Carolina.

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confess it before the court and discharge the defendants. Then the charges must have been false.

"But I may be asked, where is the motive for such a man as Capt. Nicholas Crisp making so grave charges falsely? For reply I am driven to the field of conjecture, or rather to facts brought down to us by tradition, which seems to be well sustained by the written history of the time.

"From this I find that Captain Crisp was a wealthy planter living on his lordly estate in Chowan Precinct near Queen Anne's; he was a vestryman in the Established Church and naturally one in the councils of Government; zealous, of course, in upholding the power and authority of the Church, he was full of sympathy with the strong hatred existing against those heretics who dared to preach the gospel not promulgated by the established church."

For information with reference to the gathering of this church we are indebted to Rev. John Comer, a brilliant young Baptist preacher living in 1725-31 in Newport, Rhode Island. Comer was born in Boston on August 1, 1704. He was educated at Harvard and Yale. Early in life he became much interested in religion and joined the Congregational church in Cambridge, but he became a Baptist as a result of a study of baptism which he made for the purpose of refuting the Baptist contention. On January 31, 1725, he was baptized by Reverend Elisha Callendar and became a member of the Baptist church in Boston. During part of the year he kept school and acted as pastor of the Baptist church in Swansea, but on November 1, 1725, he went to Newport where he spent six years as pastor of Baptist churches in the vicinity. In this period he gathered much information with reference to the Baptists of America of all shades of opinion. In pursuit of this information he came into correspondence with Paul Palmer and the Baptists of North Carolina. And it is from notices of this correspondence in a journal which Comer kept and which was printed in 1892 under the title, *The Diary of John Comer*, that we get our first historical information about a Baptist church in North Carolina. Comer seems to have had the purpose of writing a history of the Baptists of the colonies, but death put an end to his brilliant career in 1734, when he was not yet quite thirty years of age.

In this *Diary* under date of September 27, 1729, we find this entry:

> This day I received a letter from ye Baptist church in North Carolina, settled about two years (in ye year 1727) since, by Mr. Paul Palmer, signed by John Parker, John Jordan, Benjamin Evans, John Parker, John Brinkley, Michael Brinkley, Thomas Darker, James Copland, John Welch, Joseph Parke, William Copland, Joseph Parker.
>
> This church consists of 32 members, it meets at Chowan.

This fixes the date of the establishment of the first Baptist church in North Carolina in the year 1727. The place is fixed with no less certainty as somewhere in Chowan County. It seems, however, that Mr. Comer supposed that Chowan was a place and not a county, being led to this error by the heading of the letter, which, following the usage prevalent at that time, was dated from Chowan without further indication of locality.[21]

Benedict who had seen the manuscript journal of Comer and also a letter of Paul Palmer addressed to Comer thought that the church was at a place called Perquimans on the Chowan river. As Palmer was a resident of Perquimans precinct he doubtless had dated his letter from Perquimans, and Benedict's statement as to the location of the church was due to his effort to reconcile the names of places in Palmer's letter and Comer's journal. Comer thought Chowan a place and Benedict so regarded Perquimans, but both connected the name of Chowan with the "first church which ever existed" in North Carolina. The church was located in Chowan and not "at Chowan," as Comer supposed.

And that the church referred to in Comer's journal was in Chowan Precinct is fully corroborated by a consideration of the persons whose names were signed to the letter. Except for "Darker" which is almost certainly a mistake for "Parker," the names are Chowan Precinct names, and nearly every one of them the name of a man whose activities at this time were taken notice of in papers now found in the *Colonial Records* and other contemporary documents.

John Parker, whose name heads the list, was probably the John Parker who at this time was a justice of the peace of Chowan County,[22] having been appointed in a commission dated April 12, 1724, along with Edward Moseley,

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[21] Thus Governor Pollock dated a letter, "Chowan, July 15th, 1720."

[22] Records in the library of the N. C. State Historical Commission, Records of Chowan County.

Wm. Badham, John Alston and several others. Both John Jordan and John Parker were appointed "Appraisers of Land" at Edenton in May, 1727.[23] The former was named a Vestryman in the Vestry Act of 1715, while both he and John Parker held other important offices. The names of John Parker, William Copeland, John Welch, John Brinkley and Michael Brinkley are found on the Chowan Precinct jury lists of this period.[24]

The records relating to these men enable us to fix not only the county but also the neighborhood in which they lived. The Brinkleys had come from Nansemond County, Virginia, and lived furthest north, on Warwick Swamp, next the line of the present county of Gates.[25] The lands of Benjamin Evans were on the north side of Poplar Run, where many of the Evans name live today; the land of John Welch was also there.[26] The lands of the Parkers were somewhat further north where they had large holdings. Four of the signers of the letters owned contiguous lands. These were John Parker, Thomas Parker, John Jordan and W. Copeland.[27]

More than half of those who signed the letter were connected by family ties. In 1717 a man named Thomas Parker, a large landholder of this section died, his wife Jane (Jeane) living many years longer. The names of three of his children are signed to this letter. They are John Parker, Joseph Parker, Thomas Parker. Their daughter became the wife of Benjamin Evans. The other Joseph Parker and the other John Parker were the sons of the fathers of the same name. The younger Joseph Parker, he who was to become the preacher, married Sarah, the daughter of John Welch.[28]

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[23] *Colonial Records,* II, 673, 678.

[24] *Colonial Records,* IV, 616, 626; XXV, 185.

[25] *N. C. Historical and Genealogical Register,* II, 138, 287. This is evident from the Abstract of Conveyances. Michael B.'s wife was named Mary.

[26] *Ibid.,* II, 443, 447.

[27] *Ibid.,* I, 8.

[28] *Ibid.,* I, 362; II, 299, 144. Here we find abstracts of wills, for Thomas Parker and Joseph Parker, Sr., and abstracts of conveyances, with names

Here then in the vicinity of the present town of Cisco and of the Ballard's Bridge Baptist church was gathered the first church of the Baptists in North Carolina. And that the gospel had been preached in this section by these early General Baptist preachers is an easy inference from the statement in the *History of the Kehukee Association* about the church at Ballard's Bridge, for the authors make it plain that they are undertaking to give only the history of the Regular Baptists in that vicinity, tantalizingly neglecting to say one word about the work of the General Baptists.

This earliest of Baptist churches in North Carolina was soon scattered. We may suppose that, like the church now called Shiloh, it worshiped in the house of one or another of its members and had no meeting house; that its first and only local pastor was the youthful Joseph Parker, for Paul Palmer seems to have been an evangelist rather than a pastor; that when Joseph Parker moved to Meherrin either the church moved with him or it was left without a shepherd; that many of the members also moved away, and soon those who were left no longer assembled regularly for worship, but possibly maintained some kind of organization during the life time of Paul Palmer, and were occasionally blessed by his ministrations. Finally they met no more. As early as March 15, 1732, Governor Burrington, while reporting that in the Province were one Presbyterian minister who has a mixed audience, and four Quaker meeting houses, mentions no Baptists. But it was probably Baptists among others whom Rev. Bevil Granville, writing in the same year from Edenton, had in mind when he spoke of "various dangerous sects willing and ready to overrun the whole province." A change had already come when Rev. Clement Hall, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of

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of children given, and also names of those to whom they were married with numerous names signed in witnessing these instruments, which leave no doubt either of the family relationship or of the locality in which these people lived.

the Gospel, began his ministry in Chowan County in 1745. In speaking of the people of his parish of Chowan he declared that there were very few sectaries among them, though lower down, in Perquimans and Pasquotank, there were many Quakers and some Baptists. His statement however shows that the Dissenters, the Quakers and Baptists, had been active in the Province, for he represents the people as saying that they go "to meeting because they have not an opportunity to go to church." With a schoolmaster and minister in every parish he supposed that the Dissenters would be few. It seems to have been due to the rather aggressive as well as tactful ministry of Mr. Hall that for nearly two decades, from 1740 to 1760, the Baptists had no organized churches in Chowan. After this time we hear of the preaching of Elder John Burges of Shiloh in the Yoppim section and of the conversion of Joseph Creecy.[29]

I now turn to tell of the founding of the first Baptist church of North Carolina, which, "fully organized and equipped has come down to our day," the present church of Shiloh in Camden County.

Our earliest information of this church is found in a contemporary document, a petition such as under the terms of the Toleration Act was filed with a court or magistrate by Dissenters of that time when they formed a church. This petition was found about the year 1898 by Mr. J. B. Hathaway in a pile of old papers in the courthouse at Elizabeth City. It was first published in the *Baptist Historical Papers* for April, 1899, and later republished with comment by Dr. J. D. Hufham in the issue of the same periodical for January, 1900. It may be found also in Hathaway's *Historical and Genealogical Register*, I, 283. It reads as follows:

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[29] Mr. Hall writing on May 19, 1752, gives the following summary of his work: "I have now through God's gracious assistance and blessing in about 7 or 8 years, though frequently visited with sickness, been able to perform (for aught I know) as great ministerial duties as any minister in America, viz., to journey about 14,000 miles, preach about 675 sermons, baptize about 5,783 white children, 243 black children, 57 white adults and 112 black adults—in all 6,195 persons; and sometimes administered the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to 200 or 300 communicants in one journey, besides churching of women, visiting the sick, etc." This Mr. Hall was a citizen of the Province who seeing the religious destitution of the people became a minister, being ordained by the Bishop of London.

> *To the Worshipful Court of Pascquotank Precinct now setting:*
>
> The Honorable Petition of the subscribers, humbly sheweth, That whereas there is a Congregation of the People call$^{d}$ Baptis gather$^{d}$ In this Precinct, meeting together for Religious Worship In ye Dwelling House of William Burges, on the north side of Pascotanc, on the head of Raymond's Creek, he, ye said Burges, having granted same for ye use of ye said meeting, we Pray ye same may be recorded and we ye humble Petitioners in duty bound should pray.
>
> W. Burgess
> Paul Palmer
> Francis Brockett
> Thomas Herenton
> William Jones
> Philip Torksey
> Robert Wasson
> Charles Leutrough

The names of persons and places in the petition which will be discussed in some detail below make it certain that it refers to the beginnings of the church now at Shiloh in Camden County but which, when it first assumed a definite name, was called the Church in Pasquotank.[30] After 1777, when the part of Pasquotank County to the north and east of Pasquotank River was erected into Camden County, this church was known as the Church in Camden, and is regularly called by that name in the *History of the Kehukee*

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[30] *History of the Kehukee Association,* p. 185. Joseph Creecy "went down to Pasquotank (now Camden) and was baptized by Elder Burges." The reference is to the church and not to the county. See also Morgan Edwards' MS. History, Article "Kehukee Association," in which the first of the list of churches is Pasquotank, with note that William Burges formed it. Another name by which it was sometimes called was North-meeting, due to its location on the north side of the Pasquotank. [Morgan Edwards' MS.]. Before the Revolutionary War it was known locally as Burges's Meeting House. This is indicated in an old paper in the Pasquotank Collection in the files of the State Historical Commission at Raleigh. The pertinent part reads: "North Carolina, Pasquotank County. To William Torksey, Constable within the precinct from the mouth of the River to Burgeses Meeting House in the District of Isaac Gilford, Esq. . . . Given under my hand and seal this the xvii th day of June in the fourteenth year of His Majesty's Reign [1774], Isaac Gilford."

*Association.* It did not get the name Shiloh which it now bears before 1812.[31]

The location of the church is clearly indicated in the language of the petition, "In ye dwelling of William Burges on the North Side of Pasquotank, on the head of Ramond's Creek." Ramond's Creek (or Raymond's as it is now spelled) rises near the present church of Shiloh and the ancestral estate of the Burgeses in Camden County. The Burgeses are an old and historic family of that region. William Burges himself is described by Hufham as "a man of fervent piety, great strength of character, and of large influence." He was in 1746 commissioned by Governor Gabriel Johnston as a justice of the peace of Pasquotank County, an unusual honor for a Dissenter, and continued in that office for several years, probably until his death,[32] He was also a member of the Assembly before the "unarmed rebellion" of the five counties of the Albemarle in 1746. He was also elected in that year but like the other members from those counties did not serve. "Two of his sons, John and William, were preachers. The former was a man of superior abilities, especially in his high calling of preacher and pastor. A third son, Dempsey, was Leutenant-Colonel of North Carolina troops during the Revolution; also a member of the Convention of 1776, which at Halifax adopted the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and afterwards a member of the House of Representatives in the Congress of the United States."[33]

Nearly all the other names on the petition are names still found in Camden County.[34]

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[31] Wheeler, *History of the Meherrin Church,* as printed in Baptist *Historical Papers,* I, 42.

[32] *Colonial Records,* IV, 813. On Nov. 20, 1750, he was commissioned a second time. Cf. Papers of Pasquotank County in the files of the State Historical Commission.

[33] *Colonial Records,* XI, 683f.; Hufham, *Baptist Historical Papers,* I, 169.

[34] We have seen that a William Torksey was constable in 1774 in the district south of Burges's meeting house. Perhaps he was the son of the

This church, then, was composed of those who lived on east and north of the Pasquotank River, and is a distinct church from that which was formed in 1727 in Chowan Precinct. Heretofore it has been assumed that the two churches stood in relation to one another as parent church and arm, or branch, but the entry in Comer's journal seems to show that the church in Chowan was independent and without arm, or branch.

The records indicate that William Burges was the first pastor of the church which met in his house.[35] It is certain, however, that Paul Palmer was the leader in the formation of both these churches. We learn from Comer's journal that such was his relation to the Church in Chowan, and the fact that Palmer's name is on the petition is sufficient proof of his like relation to the church on the east of the Pasquotank River. Whether Palmer was also the pastor of either church is doubtful, but he would naturally have exercised oversight of both until they had ordained pastors of their own. We know from the *History of the Kehukee Association* that William Burges became the first pastor of the church which met in his house, and our information justifies the statement that Joseph Parker was the first and only pastor of the church in Chowan established in 1727.

When the petition was first published it was stated that it was without date, but Mr. J. R. B. Hathaway, who had found it, later published it, giving some of the names slightly different, and with the name of Paul Palmer first on the list and that of William Burges' last. By the use of a glass

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Torksey who signed the petition. Still another Torksey from Pasquotank was a member of the militia in 1755. According to Dr. Hufham many of the name, now shortened to Tocksey, still live in Camden County, where the name Herenton also is still found. Brocket is a name found on the Pasquotank militia lists in the *Colonial Records.*

[35] So Morgan Edwards in his list of churches of the Kehukee Association. Burkitt and Read also represent William Burges as being the first pastor of this church and say nothing of any pastorate of Palmer or Joseph Parker.

Mr. Hathaway had been able to make out the date which was September 5, 1729.[36] Thus the date of the registration of the Shiloh church is definitely fixed. In all probability the congregation had already been worshiping in the house of William Burges for some weeks or months. Heretofore it has been assumed that this church was founded in 1727, the assumption being based on the supposition that it was the church mentioned by Comer as settled by Paul Palmer in that year. But when it had been shown that the church mentioned by Comer was in Chowan it was no longer possible to believe that the Shiloh church was founded so early; had it been, both Palmer and Comer would have made some reference to it, and Comer would not have been so positive in his statement that the church "met at Chowan."

But this Shiloh church, while not the first historic Baptist church in North Carolina, is the oldest existing Baptist church and has a long and glorious history. Burkitt and Read speak of it as already in their time "an ancient and respectable church." They go on to say: "More can be said of this than of any church in our connection, with respect to her fruitfulness. She has borne nine sons, or ministers of the gospel; and six daughters, or constituted churches. Nine ministers have been raised in this church, viz. Elder Burges and his two sons John and William Burges, and Elders Burkitt, Etheridge, White, Davis Biggs, Lurry and Duncan. Six churches have been constituted from this, viz., Pungo in Princess Anne County, Virginia; Cowenjock; Sawyer's Creek; Knobscrook; Flatty Creek and Yoppim. And the churches at Blackwater and

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[36] *Historical and Genealogical Register,* April, 1900, p. 283. Mr. Hathaway adds this note: "The above is copied literally from the original found in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Pasquotank County. The date is erased but with the aid of a glass it was found to be Sept. 5, 1929." Later, Mr. Hathaway said from memory that the date was Sept. 5, 1727. *Register,* II, 195. Before I found Mr. Hathaway's statement of the date I had already from the considerations mentioned in the text come to the conclusion that the church in Burges's house could not have been gathered earlier than 1729.

London Bridge in Princess Anne may also claim affinity, being descendants of her children." Although this was written a half century after the death of William Burges and represents conditions in the year 1800, yet the pages of Burkitt and Read, despite their reticence of the early work of the General Baptists, do not quite conceal the fact that this church from its first years was great in its missionary zeal and labors. Long before 1757, when it was reconstituted as a Particular Baptist church, its sacred heralds were busy proclaiming the gospel in the regions round about, and from the Pasquotank to the sea, and as far north as Pungo the people had cause to say of them, "How blessed are the feet of them that bring good tidings of salvation." According to Morgan Edwards "they held their meetings in private houses till 1736 when they erected a small place," in which the church continued to worship until 1757 when a new house, fifty feet by twenty-five, was erected on land given by Elder John Burges, who was a man of "character and fortune" and bore most of the expense of the erection.[87]

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[87] Morgan Edwards' account, which seems to have been written from memory as it does not appear in his "Tour" etc., is much confused and often in error but it gives some details which I have found nowhere else. It is as follows:

"Pasquotank. Otherwise called Northmeeting from its situation, which is on the north side of Pasquotank river, in a county of the same name, 50 miles N.E. from Edentown. The house is 50 feet by 25, erected chiefly at the charge of John Burges. No estate. No fixed salary. The pay of the minister is only in the way of presents. The members are 192; families about 300. Ruling elders and laying on of hands admitted. . . . Their beginning was in this manner. About the year——several persons in the neighborhood embraced the sentiments of the General Baptists, and held their meetings in private houses till 1736, having William Burges (who was then in the commission of the peace) to their minister. Their number then was about 30. Thus they went on to 1757 when the following persons embraced the particular scheme viz John Burges, Esq., then pastor, and his son William his assistant, John Squire, Isaac Cartwright, William Burges Jun., James Earl, Joel Brocket, Henry Hayman, Thos. Cartwright, Mary Burges, Mary Farceluff and Sarah Squire. These 12 were Jan. 20, 1758, constituted in a church by means of Rev. Mess. Thomas Pope and Charles Daniel—No very remarkable thing happened since, except that in 13 years they increased from 12 to 192, and that most of their brethren of the general persuasion have joined them. The first minis[ter] was

The early pastors of this church were all able and godly men. The first was William Burges in whose house the church was first gathered and who gave local name to the meeting house, of whom I have spoken above in the account of the founding of the church. He continued his ministry until after 1750. It was a growing church and under its first minister increased from about 30 members in 1736 to about 200 in 1755. He was succeeded by his son John, whom Edwards calls the "first minister," meaning the first after the church became a Particular Baptist church in 1757. Both Burkitt and Read and Edwards agree in testifying to his piety, ability and missionary zeal, a bright and shining light. After his death on July 13, 1763, he was succeeded about 1765 by Elder Henry Abbot, the son of Rev. John Abbot, Canon of St. Paul's London. On coming to America when quite young Abbot had kept school for a while. It seems that he became a General Baptist in 1758 and was baptized by Elder Joseph Parker. After that for some years he was an itinerant preacher, but changing his sentiments he became a Particular Baptist and was ordained by Elders Charles Daniel and James Gamewell. In 1764 or 1765 he became pastor of the Pasquotank church and continued in that relation until his death in 1791. According to Burkitt and Read:

> He continued preaching and baptizing here until the revolution took place at the Falls of Tar River (1775). After this, being dissatisfied with his former baptism in unbelief, he was baptized upon a confession of faith in Christ Jesus, and still continued his

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REV. JOHN BURGES

He was a native of the place and a man of character and fortune, and many years in the commission of the peace. He died Jul. 13. 1763, in the 38 year of his age; and was interred in the burying ground belonging to the society, which ground and meeting house were his own, but, by his request, has been properly conveyed to the society by his son Demsey. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Charles Daniel to a crowded audience who expressed much grief at the loss of so bright and burning a light. He was ordained minister of this church at the constitution or reform, Jan. 20 1758. His wife was Margaret Bell by whom he had children, John, Demsey, William, Zephaniah."

> pastoral functions in that church, and his labors were blest. He was a man of strong mind, very orthodox, well acquainted with church discipline, and of a distinguished character. He was chosen several times a member of the State Convention. He was a member of the Provincial Congress when the State Constitution was formed and adopted; and to him we owe our thanks, in a measure, for the security of our religious rights. He was also a member of the convention for the deliberation of the Federal Constitution, and at the time of his election had a greater number of votes than any man in the county. After he had for many years been useful it was the will of the Lord to call him away to receive the crown of righteousness he had laid up for him. . . . He departed this life, May, 1791. He requested a long time before he died, that, if Elder Burkitt survived him, he should preach his funeral sermon; which he did to a crowded and much affected audience, from II Timothy, iv, 7, 8."[38]

There are clear indications that a missionary spirit characterized this church from its first organization. Its young men were fired with a zeal to preach the Gospel and they are described as itinerant preachers. By their labors they doubtless had already, while General Baptists, gathered congregations of worshipers, connected probably as arms with the parent church in the house of William Burges, in those places where later we find independent churches, such as Cowenjock, Sawyer's Creek and Pungo. Under the ministry of the Burgeses, father and son, and Abbot, the church was a beacon light of salvation to those who were sitting in darkness even in remote counties. Elder William Burges carried the Gospel to Swift Creek in Craven county. The following relation from the *History of the Kehukee Association* will show something of the activity of his son:

> The first person we know of who was a resident near Yoppim and was received into a Baptist church was Joseph Creecy, a man of considerable fortune, and in much esteem amongst the people. After he had a hope that the Lord had converted his soul, he went down to Pasquotank (now Camden) and was baptized by Elder

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[38] *History of the Kehukee Association,* p. 108f. The account of Morgan Edwards is utterly in error. He supposed that Abbot died in February, 1772.

> John Burges. And it raised the admiration of his neighbors, because when he was baptized it was in the time of a great snow. But we think we can, as old experienced ministers, who have baptized hundreds, testify that we never knew a person to receive any damage by going into the water at such times; no, not even so much as to take a cold.[39]
>
> After brother Creecy had joined the church, soon after, Abraham Jennet, Delight Nixon, Thomas and Mary Burkitt, Melvin Dukes and others were baptized. . . . The few members gathered here continued a branch of the Camden church. Elder Abbot used to attend them at times and the places he preached at were chiefly Joseph Creecy's and Thomas Burkitt's. This branch kept increasing until the year 1775, when it became a constituted body. The meeting house is east of Edenton about five miles.

Right worthy, indeed, is this church of high place in the respect and love of our Baptist people, but as it is not my purpose to carry the account in the present section of my work later than the time of the organization of the Kehukee Association, I now turn to some further account of Paul Palmer.

Comer's *Diary* contains some references to Mr. Palmer from December 1, 1729. On this date he notes that he wrote a letter to Mr. Palmer, "minister at North Carolina." On the fourteenth of the same month he has an entry showing that he had received a letter from Palmer with a "small token of love." In March, 1730, he writes that he had received a letter from Mr. Paul Palmer, minister in North Carolina, together with a manuscript for the press entitled "Christ the Predestinated and Elected." I have not been able to find that the paper was published. Again we learn from the *Diary* of Mr. Comer that in the fall of 1730 Mr. Palmer went to New England to visit the churches there. Palmer seems to have made his way thither by water. After spending some time with the churches in Massachusetts he started by land on his return to North Carolina intending to visit the churches at Newport. But as the smallpox had been epidemic in Boston at the time of his visit Mr. Palmer found that Rhode Island had set a quarantine which prevented his going to Newport. By prearrangement he met Mr. Comer at North Kingstown. Mr. Comer does not tell what matters were discussed at their conference, but he was very favorably impressed with Mr. Palmer, closing his entry on the meeting with the statement that Palmer was a "man of parts and worthy."[40]

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[39] Elder John Leland says: "I have seen ice cut more than a foot thick, and people baptized in the water, and yet I have never heard of any person taking cold, or any kind of sickness in so doing." *Writings*, "Virginia Chronicle," p. 116.

Continuing his journey southward, as we learn from a further entry in Comer's *Diary*, Mr. Palmer stopped a while with Rev. John Drake, the aged pastor of the Church at Piscataway in East New Jersey, a descendant of the famous Sir Francis Drake, and a man of much ability, piety and influence. During his stay here Mr. Palmer assisted Mr. Drake in the ordination of Henry Loveall, who had come to the church with the recommendation of Mr. Comer and some other New England Baptists, but who was later discovered to be an escaped convict from Long Island. Because of their relation to Loveall, Comer, Palmer and Drake came under the censure of some in New England. Loveall assisted Mr. Drake at Piscataway until his real character became known. Later, as we have seen, he became connected with the church at Chestnut Ridge in Maryland and in 1742 was its pastor. It is not improbable that he was recommended to this church by Mr. Palmer, who had himself in his early ministry preached to that congregation and baptized nine of its members as related above. It cannot be doubted that Mr. Palmer visited this church on his return to North Carolina, and nothing is more probable than that his opinion of Loveall was expressed. Loveall's future record showed that he was unworthy; he had deceived Palmer as he had deceived Comer.

The records of this trip of Mr. Palmer are scant but they give some certain indications of his character. Only a person of some means could have undertaken such a journey. His plan of visiting the churches of a remote section shows that he was a man of large conceptions, of proper self-respect, and calm assurance of his own powers. And the reception accorded him by Mr. Comer and Mr. Drake, two of the ablest ministers who have lived in America, suggest that he had not thought of himself more highly than he should have thought.[41]

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[40] *Diary*, entry for October 6, 1730.

There is no entry relating to Mr. Palmer in Comer's *Diary* of later date than 1730. Morgan Edwards writing in 1772, in a note to his account of the formation of the Kehukee Association, says that, "Paul Palmer gathered a church at New River," which Mr. Edwards supposed to be near the South Carolina line, while in reality it is in Onslow County, North Carolina. As in the year 1731 there were hardly three freeholders and not more than thirty families in all of Onslow, the implication is that it was subsequent to this time that Mr. Palmer gathered this church. By the year 1734 there were more than a hundred families of poor people, with a vast number of children settled on New River, and already they were being visited by Rev. Richard Marsden, an itinerant preacher of the Church of England who lived at Wilmington, and by Rev. John La Pierre, who also lived on the Cape Fear and who hoped that he might be appointed missionary to the parish in which New River was included. La Pierre represented the inhabitants as very desirous of having divine worship set up among them, in which desire they were encouraged by Governor Burrington and one Mr. John Williams. But the place did not long receive the ministrations of these ministers: Mr. Marsden seems not to have kept up his occasional visits which he made without charge, while La Pierre received no encouragement from the Society nor from the inhabitants of the Cape Fear, but was forced to ward off starvation by working on a farm with his own hands.[42] Neither of these ministers say anything of the work of Paul Palmer in these parts. Nor does Governor Burrington. Hence, it is probable that Mr. Palmer gathered the church here after the year 1735. Later the Separates from Sandy Creek came among them and organized one of the earliest churches of the Sandy Creek Association. In 1761 the Pastor of Bath, who had made an itinerary into Onslow the previous winter, reported that only a few Episcopalians were left there, but that it was "the present seat of enthusiasm in this Province," the enthusiasm being the Newlight religious experience. Here we have a concrete instance of the sowing of Mr. Palmer yielding harvests for Baptists of another order to garner.

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[41] Morgan Edwards in his rather deprecatory account of Mr. Palmer says: "He at last moved to North Carolina, where he gathered the church above mentioned, with which he continued, not however without some difficulties, until his death. He appears to have been the instrument of doing some good, but was not so happy as to leave a good character behind him." Materials for a History of the Baptists, Maryland, used by Benedict, *History of Baptists,* p. 681, edition of 1846.

To gather churches in the early colonial days was no little task. A half score ministers of the Church of England had labored in North Carolina in the quarter of a century before 1727. They had the support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and of an Establishment in the Province. But all their efforts had ended in such failure that they all had left the field vacant before October, 1729. But within the last four years Paul Palmer had begun his wonderful evangelical career and was already founding Baptist churches, thus initiating a movement which has continued to grow with the passing years and has made the Baptists by far the most numerous body of Christians in North Carolina. Governor Everard writing to the Bishop of London under date of October 12, 1729, declared that on his arrival in the Province in 1725 he heard of no Dissenters except Quakers. By 1729 Palmer had brought about a religious transformation which the Governor regarded with nothing short of wonder. He was leading the Baptists in a great missionary campaign, holding daily meetings and making proselytes in every part of the Government. His converts were numbered by the hundreds and the Baptists were flourishing. Governor Everard as a good Churchman, or desiring to appear such to the Bishop of London, confessed that he was powerless to prevent or withstand the great tide of religious enthusiasm which under the preaching of Palmer was sweeping over the Province. Especially did he regard the prospect for the Establishment desperate in view of the immoral and irreverent lives of some in high places who should be the support of the Church. The only hope for the Church was the sending of ministers of pure lives and zeal for their work, with plain intimation that such had not been the character of the former ministers who had been in North Carolina. His silence on the character of Mr. Palmer is sufficient proof that he knew nothing against it.

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[42] *Colonial Records,* III, 391, 339, 342, 529, 623.

It is significant that Everard mentions no preacher except Palmer, although he was writing from Edenton only a few miles from the church in Chowan some of whose members, Joseph Parker among them, had a few weeks before sent the letter discussed above to Elder John Comer.

With reference to this work of Palmer some questions arise. What was its nature? What were its permanent results?

The first question may be answered by giving the words of Burkitt and Read:[43]

> The most of these churches (those of the Kehukee Association), before they were ever united in an Association, were General Baptist, and held with the Arminian tenets. . . . They preached and adhered to the Arminian, or Free-will doctrines, and their churches were first established upon this system. They

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[43] *History of the Kehukee Association*, p. 28.

> gathered churches without requiring an experience of grace previous to their baptism, but baptized all who believed in the doctrine of baptism by immersion, and requested baptism of them. The churches of this order were first gathered here by Elders Paul Palmer and Joseph Parker.

I shall point out later the evil consequences of admitting the unconverted to baptism and to church membership, the disrepute into which it brought some of the churches and the division of the Baptists, the precedent which it was to give Alexander Campbell a hundred years later for his contentions in support of his schism from the Baptists. But because of its Arminian character we may be sure that the preaching of Palmer made a readier appeal. Though unlimited Arminianism entails evil consequences, as in the case of these early North Carolina Baptists, it must be admitted that a too rigid Calvinism repels, and we do well to remember the words of Elder John Leland: "It is a matter of fact that the preaching that has been most blessed of God, and most profitable to men, is the doctrine of sovereign grace in the salvation of souls, mixed with a little of what is called Arminianism.[44]

Palmer was an evangelist rather than a pastor, but he baptized as many disciples as he made, without necessarily gathering them into churches. This continued to be the practice of the evangelists of the General Baptists in the Province, an example of which may be found in the account of the beginning of the work at Reedy Creek church in Warren County, as told by Burkitt and Read. They say:[45]

> Doctor Josiah Hart was the first preacher of the Baptist persuasion who preached here. He came about the year 1750 and preached and baptized. Soon after him Wm. Washington, James Smart, Sam. Davis, William Walker and others joined in the work of preaching and baptizing, all upon what is called the Free-will plan, and numbers came and were baptized, but nothing like a church constitution.

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[44] *Letter of Valediction on Leaving Virginia in 1791.*
[45] *Kehukee Association,* p. 229.

As late as 1783 the Kehukee Association authorized an itinerant preacher to baptize "when he travels into dark places, destitute of ministerial helps, and persons get converted and desire baptism of him and are not capable to make application to any church by reason of their distance from them."[46]

As to the results of Palmer's work, in a general sense all those whom he baptized, converted and unconverted, became Baptists, just as all the children and the few adults baptized by the ministers of the Church of England were regarded as being in the pale of the church, even though they had no connection with any local organization. Such a church relationship seemed quite natural in those days. And attention needs to be called to the fact that probably the statement of Burkitt and Read that Palmer and his successors admitted the unconverted to baptism is not quite fair. It would be more nearly true to say that they considered willingness to be baptized a sufficient evidence of conversion, just as the churches of the Disciples do today. Results proved that they were mistaken. On the organization of the Reedy Creek church, spoken of above, the stricter Particular Baptists, claiming to exercise the greatest charity, found only thirteen whom they believed converted out of a very host of those baptized by the ministers of the General Baptists.

It is probable, however, that a much larger proportion of Palmer's disciples were converted. But whether converted or unconverted they were soon numerous and uncompromising adherents of Baptist principles. Being widely scattered and having no pastors and teachers they had to depend for religious instruction on the sermons of Palmer on his rare visits. Under such conditions it is small wonder that many of them made little progress in Christian living and many of them fell away; they should not be judged too harshly.

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[46] *Kehukee Association,* p. 69.

It is not improbable, however, that other congregations were gathered by Palmer than those in Chowan, Camden and Onslow. We may be sure that churches were gathered wherever the number of converts was sufficient and a local pastor could be secured. Both of these requisites seem to have been met in New Bern in 1740, when as we shall see below, a congregation of Baptists petitioned to be allowed to build a house of worship; they were also met in Beaufort on Bay and Neuse rivers in 1742 when a congregation of Dissenters filed a petition with Chief Justice Montgomery to be allowed to register two places of worship, of which also more will be found below. Of the churches thus formed, that of Swift Creek in Craven County, whose founding as a General Baptist church Morgan Edwards attributes to the preaching of Elder William Burges, became a Particular Baptist church in 1756 and later a member of the Kehukee Association. In all probability the church on Pungo in Beaufort County, where Elder John Winfield was pastor about 1755, was founded partly by some of the early converts of Palmer. The presence of two kinds of Baptists, which are clearly General and Separates, is indicated in a letter of Rev. Alexander Stewart of Bath, written in 1760.[47] There was also a church at Mattamuskeet in Hyde County whose origin is obscure but possibly goes back to Palmer's converts.

In another respect the labors of Palmer have proved of value to the Baptists. He planted in the hearts of many the Baptist faith from which others were to reap the harvests. Some of his converts were gathered later by the Separates under Stearns on the Trent and New River. To Palmer and his fellow workers rather than to those who labored at Kehukee must be ascribed the gathering of the congregations from which afterwards were formed the churches at Bear Creek in the present county of Lenoir and Red Banks and Flat Swamp in Pitt, all of which changed from the General to the Particular order and later became members of the Kehukee Association. Palmer started the Baptist work in North Carolina and from his time until now it has made constant progress. But from the first the Baptists suffered the handicap of not having a sufficient number of men of education and zeal to lead and instruct the converts made. As we shall see later it was the policy of the Church of England in its plans for the propagation of the Gospel in North Carolina to make it all but impossible for any but themselves to have an educated ministry.

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[47] *Colonial Records,* VI, 316. Mr. Stewart's language is: "Of late years this province is overrun with a people that at first called themselves Anabaptists, but having now refined upon that scheme, have run into so many errors & have so bewildered & I may say almost bewitched the minds of the people that scarcely will they listen to anything that can be said in defence of the church we belong to."

How long did Palmer continue this work? We have no certain indication of the time of his death except that Burkitt and Read say that he was dead when Gano visited the State in 1754. Dr. Hufham says that Palmer was still entering land in Perquimans County in 1738. In that year he registered for license as a Dissenting preacher with the General Court at Edenton as appears from a document found by Mr. J. R. B. Hathaway in the Court House at Edenton, which reads as follows:

> North Carolina.
>
> Permission is hereby granted to Paul Palmer, of Edenton, a Protestant Minister to teach or Preach the word of God in any part of the said Province (he having qualified himself as such) pursuant to an Act of Parliament made in the first year of King William and Queen Mary Intitled an "Act for Tolerating Protestant Dissenters."
>
> Given under my hand at Edenton for the 4th day of October Anno Dom., 1738. (Not signed)

The above paper is endorsed on the back "To be Registered for Paul Palmer."

The question may arise as to why Mr. Palmer had waited so long to take out such a license. The answer would seem to be that he was free to preach without molestation in the previous years; there had been no disposition to interfere with him in the Albemarle; he had complied with the Act of 1715 which required that all meetings should be public; he had complied with the Toleration Act in seeing that the church which met in the house of William Burges was duly registered. But about this time the Churchmen on the Pamlico and the Neuse began to manifest such pronounced hostility to the Baptists that Mr. Palmer purposing to preach again among them took the precaution to be armed with a license giving the permission of the highest court "to preach the word of God in any part of the Province." For the wonderful zeal of the ministry of Paul Palmer of which Governor Everard spoke in 1729 and which this license shows continued without abatement for a dozen years longer had made the spirit of intolerance of the bigoted Churchmen show its ugly head. The partisans of the Church of England aroused by the great success of Palmer were now organizing to lay special taxes by legislative enactment for the construction of churches at New Bern, Bath, Wilmington, Edenton and Brunswick, and were hoping to make way for progress in their own church by using measures legal and illegal to resist whatever efforts the Dissenting Baptists were making to teach the destitute colonists of North Carolina the way of life. As justices in the courts these Churchmen were refusing to grant the Baptists the benefits of the Toleration Act on the registration of their churches, and when after violating the rights of their fellow colonists and British subjects in this high handed way they found the Baptists obeying God rather than man and engaging in Christian worship they had interfered and broken up their meetings; nay, they went further and harassed the Baptists by prosecuting them in the courts. Of this a more particular account will be found below in this chapter.

I have said that about the year 1730 Joseph Parker moved to Meherrin. As the remarkable development of the

Baptists for the next quarter of a century kept pace with a concomitant advance of the population from the Albemarle westward as far as Granville and Orange counties and extending to the south as far as Johnston, we can understand that development as we connect it with the expansion of the population.

Patents were given for land in the territory of Bertie as early as 1701. In 1722 the inhabitants to the west of the Chowan River "were growing very numerous" and the Assembly laid out for their accommodation the new precinct of Bertie, making it include all the territory west of the Chowan River between the Virginia line on the north and the Albemarle Sound on the south, thence up the Roanoke River to Welch's Creek, and thence to the west as far as "the government extended."[48] Among the first who entered lands on Tar River was Paul Palmer in 1723.[49] After 1729 the western limit of Bertie was fixed at the Roanoke River, but in 1727 the "outer inhabitants" were already on Fishing Creek in the present county of Halifax.[50]

In 1741 Northampton County, including a large part of the present county of Hertford, which was formed in 1760, was laid off from the territory of Bertie, in which county the inhabitants were said to be more numerous than in any other county in the Province.[51] In the same year the Assembly formally recognized the county of Edgecombe, which had been created a county by Governor Burrington in 1731. It embraced all the territory bounded by the Virginia line on the north, by the Roanoke River on the east, and by a line extending indefinitely westward from a point on the river about where Williamston now stands.[52] In 1746 this county had already become "so extensively settled" that the county of Granville, including what is now Warren and Franklin counties and extending without stated limit westward was laid off and its court house built in the present territory of Warren County on Rocky Creek, near Boiling Spring.[53]

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[48] *Laws of North Carolina,* 1722, Chapter VII.

[49] Turner and Bridgers, *History of Edgecombe County,* p. 18.

[50] *Laws of North Carolina,* 1727, Chapter VII; 1729, Chapter II.

[51] *Ibid.,* 1741, Chapter I. After 1738 the name "county" displaced that of "precinct."

[52] *Ibid.,* 1741, Chapter VII.

In the region to the south of Albemarle Sound in 1729 the precinct of Tyrrell was laid off embracing the present county of Washington and extending indefinitely to the west, while to the south of Tyrrell was Beaufort, and south of Beaufort was Craven, both without definite western limit. The inhabitants of the latter county had become so widely scattered to the west in 1746 that Johnston County was laid off for their convenience.[54]

In 1722 Carteret Precinct was separated from Craven; the latter was left with the territory of the settlements on the Neuse and Trent and their branches, while Carteret was regarded as extending to the South Carolina line. In 1729 that portion of Carteret to the south of Haulover and Little Inlet was formed into the precinct of New Hanover; from New Hanover were laid out Onslow in 1731-34, Duplin in 1749, and Bladen in 1731-35; from Bladen, which first included the present territory of Columbus and much of the present county of Brunswick, the territory to the west of the Little Pee Dee was erected into the county of Anson in 1749. This was done for the convenience of settlers who had moved up the Great Pee Dee from South Carolina.

I omit here to speak of the erection of other counties since the settlements begun in them were disregarded by the Government of the Province before the year 1750.

A word needs to be said about the people who were coming in increasing numbers to North Carolina and making the erection of new counties necessary. In the Cape Fear region there were in 1729 about five hundred inhabitants. These first settlers were for the most part English and such were the large number of new settlers who came in year by year. Some of these were men of good families and of much business enterprise and gained early a position of prominence and influence, some in the busy commerce of the Cape Fear, some in the manufacture of lumber and naval stores, some as owners of large estates with numerous slaves, some as lawyers, and some as officers of the government. They were in principle if not in practice devoted to the Church of England, and did much to reproduce in North Carolina the class distinctions in society that they had left in England. It was this class which assembled in Wilmington and later in other towns of the Province sought to promote the Establishment by laying a poll tax on the people to build churches, purchase glebes and build mansions for their ministers, while in some instances they regarded the Dissenters with scorn as ignorant and inferior people. And yet, even in the Cape Fear region, probably half of the settlers were Dissenters.[55] Beginning with 1739 and continuing to the first years of the Revolution large groups, often more than 250 in a company, of Scotch Highlanders were finding homes in Bladen as far west as the eastern limit of Anson County. But there were no ministers of the gospel among them.[56] These were mostly Presbyterians. In Duplin Irish and Swiss, as well as Englishmen, were finding homes. The Poor Palatines ousted by foreclosure proceedings from their lands near New Bern were finding homes further up the Trent and Neuse rivers, while new settlers from both old and New England were coming to the region of New Bern. At the same time the counties along the Virginia line continued to receive large numbers every year from Virginia. Some of these coming by the port of Norfolk had doubtless on their departure from their homes intended to settle in North Carolina. They were the sturdy English middle class, seeking free homes of their own.

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[53] *Ibid.*, 1746, Chapter III; Devin, *Grassy Creek Church*, p. 22.
[54] *Ibid.*, 1746, Chapter II.

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[55] *Colonial Records,* IV, 605. Statement of Rev. James Moir, writing from Wilmington, April 22, 1742: "I take one-half of the whites to be Dissenters of various denominations."

[56] Foote, *Sketches,* p. 131, says: "No minister of religion accompanied the first emigrants in 1746 and 1747; nor is it known that any came with any succeeding company till the year 1770."

Among the inhabitants of the new precinct of Bertie about the year 1729 were many from Chowan. Already thus early the section around the present town of Cisco was considered too thickly settled, and many were selling their lands and moving further west.[57] Although the front of the tide of settlers was already forty miles further west in what is now the county of Warren, it is probable that very few had settled immediately along the Meherrin or the upper reaches of the Roanoke, since the lands here were either occupied by the Indians or recognized as their hunting grounds. The natives still manifested some resentment that the white man was cutting down trees and planting corn in their hunting preserves. Frequently the Meherrins asked the Governors of Virginia to intercede for them against the encroachments of the settlers from North Carolina. But when the running of the line between the two states in 1729 showed that the Meherrins were in the domain of North Carolina they could only make complaint to the North Carolina Government. Sometimes, too, brooding over their wrongs they would let their savage nature assert itself in horrible crimes. In this section, on July 25, 1726, a Meherrin Indian named Seneka murdered Catherine Groom, wife of Thomas Groom, and her two infant daughters, by braining them with an axe. The Indians, however, promptly delivered him for trial, at which with Indian stolidity he confessed his guilt and was sentenced to be hanged.[58]

A statement made in a government report of 1754 that these Indians were living on terms of perfect friendship with the whites was hardly justified even then. Bishop Spangenburg, the Moravian explorer, who had visited this section two years before had a different tale to tell. In Pennsylvania, he said, the Indians were feared only when they were drunk. But in North Carolina they conducted themselves in such a manner that the whites lived in fear of them and found it hard to avoid trouble with them. They would enter a house when the man was not at home and show themselves insolent to the woman and make her do their commands. Sometimes they would come in such companies that even the men were sorely pressed and were often unable to prevent their killing or driving off their cattle. Some men, however, had the proper courage and determination to deal with them. Andrew Lambert, returning from a hunt, and finding some prowling Indians killing his stock, set his pack of eight or ten bear dogs on them and drove them out like sheep.[59]

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[57] See the list of conveyances for this period in the *Historical and Genealogical Register.*

[58] *Colonial Records,* 640, 664-65.

In 1729 the Meherrins had a reservation along the Virginia line east of the Roanoke, on which the whites were already making encroachments, of which the Indians sorely complained. By 1754 they were nearly all removed to the Roanoke and numbered not more than twenty. There was another tribe called Saponas of about the same number on the Roanoke in 1754. After 1712 the Tuscaroras had a reservation assigned them on the east side of the Roanoke River near Rich Square. This reservation was twelve miles long and contained ten thousand acres, and covered the section of Bertie now known as Indian Wood. In 1754 they had 100 fighting men; in 1729 they had been more numerous.

It was into the wild country near such neighbors that Joseph Parker and his wife Sarah came about the year 1730. At this time he was probably not more than twenty-five years of age.[60] But he was now beginning those evangelical labors which were so numerous that Burkitt and Read mention him with Paul Palmer as one of the founders of the Baptist churches in eastern North Carolina.

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[59] *Colonial Records,* IV, 1313f.

[60] Wheeler, *History of Meherrin Church.* He was still active until shortly before his death in 1791. He was the fourth child of Joseph Parker, Sr. Hathaway, *Hist. and Geneal. Register,* I, 362, whose will was probated at the January court of 1750. Unless his father died in extreme old age his fourth son was not born before 1705.

I have found no documentary evidence as to the exact date Parker came to Meherrin. The date given in recent years is 1729 and this is accepted by both Hufham and Dr. N. B. Cobb for the establishment of the Meherrin Church.[61] Neither of them gives the source of his information. Wheeler, the historian of the church and a resident of Murfreesboro, does not mention the date at which Parker "set up public worship," but implies that it was before 1735, about which time Parker with the aid of his neighbors erected their first meeting house on land that he himself had given for the purpose. As we are dependent on Wheeler for most that is known of the work of Parker at the Meherrin church and of Parker's last years I quote his account from this point:

> The house was built of hewn logs, and was 20x25 feet in size. His labors were confined, principally, to the people in this immediate vicinity until 1773, when he removed, according to tradition, "South of Tar River," and there ended his earthly pilgrimage. Of the history of the church during the service of this, her first pastor, but little is now known; nor is it probable that we shall ever know more of that interesting period than we have already learned. Elder Parker was a consistent Christian, a zealous and successful minister. While pastor of the church, he lived on the farm on which he first settled on his removal from Camden. This farm afterwards came into the possession of the late Rev. Daniel Southall, and is now the property of his heirs. The land on which the church now stands was given to the church by Elder Parker; and but for the unfortunate destruction of the county records by fire in August, 1831, we might now have the pleasure of inspecting an autograph of our ancient bishop. As the population increased, Elder Parker again removed. His course was southward, and he finally settled about forty miles above New Bern, in a region of country embraced in the present limits of Lenoir County. Here he and his wife lived in limited circumstances, supported by a few members of the Freewill Baptist church. He preached occasionally

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[61] *Baptist Historical Papers,* I, 91, 165.

on Conetoe Creek, and also on Pungo River. His labors were not so greatly blessed as they had been in former times. In Dobbs County (since divided into Wayne, Lenoir and Greene counties), Elder Parker was highly esteemed. It was to this county his labors were mostly confined, rarely preaching at any other place but at Wheat Swamp, near which church he settled. His services at Pungo and Conetoe were not rendered oftener than once or twice a year. In the great reformation which took place among the Baptists of North Carolina, Elder Joseph Parker, William Parker, and Winfield refused to unite. As the reformed Baptists were styled Separates, the Parkers and their adherents assumed the title of Freewill Baptists. Joseph Parker departed this life about 1791 or 1792, and was buried in Robert Wyrington's burial-ground, on Wheat Swamp. James Roach, a Freewill minister from Craven County, took charge of the churches on Wheat Swamp and Loosing Swamp on the demise of Elder Parker, and under his labors the churches were revived and greatly increased. There are at this time (about 1845) more than three thousand members of the Freewill churches, who are probably the descendants of the handful on Wheat Swamp, Pungo, and Conetoe. Rev. Lewis Whitfield, an aged Baptist minister in Carteret county, says that Elder Joseph Parker "was a square-built man," with broad face, about five feet eight inches high, and in his later years wore on his head a cap continually. His manner of preaching was full of animation. Mr. Whitfield does not know whether he left any children, and says that no monument marks the spot where his ashes repose.

This account of Wheeler, which is the source of most that we know of the later years of Joseph Parker, contains a few errors which, with the aid of materials now available, we are able to correct. We have seen that Parker was not from Camden, as Wheeler takes for granted, but from Chowan; furthermore, Burkitt and Read do not mention Parker in the list of ministers of the church now called Shiloh. As Hertford County was not formed until 1760 the destruction of its records did not include deeds made before that date.

Wheeler's account lacks detail, but we can fill in his picture in some instances. It is probable that the neighbors and friends who joined with Parker in constituting the church at Meherrin were his former neighbors in Chowan and had come with him as a colony to this region. The records show that such was true of the Brinkleys.

In the year 1740, according to the statement of J. W. Moore, a resident of Murfreesboro, and the author of several works on North Carolina history and of a manuscript history of the Baptists of North Carolina, "Joseph Parker and his people at Meherrin dimissed by letter enough of their members to form what was long known as Bertie Church, but later Sandy Run."[62] The location of this church, near the present town of Roxobel, was such as would naturally invite the labors of Parker. Possibly later the church at Kehukee supplied its preachers. Moore's account of its origin seems the most probable.[63]

It seems probable that Wheeler was mistaken about the time when Joseph Parker left Meherrin. Facts now well established indicate that he left the church much earlier to the care of William Parker, probably the son William Parker, an uncle of Joseph Parker. As early as May 7, 1742, Joseph Parker made a petition to the Council for a grant of 200 acres of land in Edgecombe.[64] According to Morgan Edwards he gathered the church at Lower Fishing Creek, near Enfield, and had it under his charge from 1748. Edwards' language implies that Parker remained here until about the time that the churches of this region were transformed into churches of the Particular Baptist order.[65] It is probable that about this time Parker went "south of the Tar." In 1758, according to Edwards, he baptized Henry Abbot, who until that time had been a teacher. In 1761 he was already at Little Contentnea, in the present county of Greene, where in that year he baptized one Joshua Vining, whom Edwards found ten years later preaching at Lynch's Creek in South Carolina. These activities of Parker were in sections too remote from Meherrin to have made it possible for him to have regularly served that church at the same time.[66]

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[62] This valuable work, which is very compendious and full, is worthy of publication. Hufham, *N. C. Baptist Historical Papers,* I, 226, says, on what authority does not appear, "The first work of the church at Kehukee was the establishment of an arm at Sandy Run, Bertie County, which became an independent body in 1750, the year after Sojourner's death." On the other hand, Moore in the work already mentioned, Chapter II, page 21, says, "There is no tradition of any labors on his (Sojourner's) part east of the Roanoke river." Burkitt and Read claim that this was a Calvinistic church from its first constitution and therefore was not established before 1755. But this is doubtless incorrect. All readers of the *History of the Kehukee Association* soon learn that it lacks completeness not to say accuracy in matters that concern the General Baptists.

[63] Among the many unsolved problems of our early Baptist history is one that relates to this region. Burkitt and Read say that a young lady of Bertie, Anne Moore, whose home was at Cashie, found it necessary to go to South Carolina to secure baptism, and as a result became the wife of Rev. Jeremiah Dargan who returned with her to Cashie about the year 1769. But at this time the churches at Meherrin, Sandy Run, Kehukee, etc., had long been established and Miss Moore could have secured baptism by immersion at any of them.

[64] *Colonial Records,* IV, 619.

The Meherrin church until 1794 had services every Sunday (Wheeler). The tables of Asplund, who was himself a member of this church, show up till this time it was the only church in Hertford County. In its first years this church and its branch at Sandy Run seem to have furnished the only Christian ministrations for the territory between the Chowan and the Roanoke. It is true that in 1736 Rev. John Boyd, who had previously been a physician in Chowan, after taking orders in London, returned and began in Bertie with some enthusiasm work as a minister of the Church of England in Northwest Parish embracing the northern part of Bertie which then included what is now Hertford and Northampton. But in a year or two he had fallen a victim to the drink habit, to the great scandal of his superiors and to the detriment of religion.[67] After such experiences with ministers of the Established church, and with the behavior of Brett and Urmstone not forgotten, it is small wonder that the inhabitants of this parish would not support a minister of the Church, although in the very year that the log meeting house was built at Meherrin, these same frontiersmen said by way of protest to Governor Johnston, "that his Majesty in his whole dominion has not a set of more faithful Protestants than the inhabitants of North Carolina."[68] It was in vain that Governor Johnston a year later deploring "the almost total want of divine worship throughout the Province," urged the Assembly to provide for the support of the Establishment. It was at this very time that Joseph Parker and his little church at Meherrin, "this venerable mother of churches" (Moore), were meeting every Sunday for Christian worship and alone in all this wide region were preaching the gospel of the Savior and calling men to repentance. And this must have been done with the greater acceptance because their pastor, Joseph Parker, was walking in all the commands and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.

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[65] He says that Fishing Creek "existed a society of general baptists, since the year 1748, under the care of Mr. Parker. But the chief of them receiving the doctrines of Grace, they were, Oct. 13, 1756, reformed," etc.

[66] Wheeler's statement is probably based upon an inaccurate account in the *History of the Kehukee Association,* that, "Elder W. Parker was in the exercise of the pastoral function as early as 1773. How long before we are not able to say." Page 208. This only means that Burkitt found William Parker at Meherrin when he took charge of Sandy Run in 1773.

Burkitt and Read mention Parker and Paul Palmer as the ministers who gathered the churches in the bounds of the Kehukee Association, which fact Wheeler seems to have disregarded in his statement that until 1773 Mr. Parker confined his labors to the vicinity of the Meherrin. Burkitt and Read think of Parker rather as an evangelist and say nothing of his founding the Meherrin church. They say, however, that "Elders Joseph Parker, William Parker,

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[67] Governor Johnston had this to say of him: "I have heard such accounts of his behavior as are really shocking, particularly that on a Sunday this Spring at noon day he was seen by many persons lying dead drunk (& fast asleep) on the great road to Virginia, with his horse's bridal tied to his legs; this I have been assured of by several persons of the best credit." *Colonial Records*, IV, 264.

[68] *Colonial Records*, IV, 21, 227.

(John) Winfield, and others frequently preached here." This statement is valuable since it suggests that Meherrin was a kind of headquarters from which these ministers went forth on evangelistic tours such as we know were often made by the General Baptist preachers in the early days of the Province.

When Mr. Edwards was in the Kehukee region in 1772 the Fishing Creek church had two branches, one at Swift Creek, eight miles off and another at Rocky Swamp, twelve miles off. It is somewhat more than a conjecture that the branch on Swift Creek, at least was established by Parker, since it furnished an easy approach towards the Falls of Tar River, where either Parker or some other preacher not known had preached and baptized before 1744, and from which Parker in a few years made his way south of the Tar, probably to Toisnot and certainly to Little Contentnea not later than 1761.[69]

We wish that we knew more of Mr. Parker's life and work than our records supply. It was precisely because he was a General Baptist and so continued until his death that we know so little of him, for the Particular Baptists who wrote our early histories say little of the work of any General Baptist, and nothing at all except as it throws light on Particular Baptist history. We know enough, however, of Joseph Parker to declare that he was a true and faithful servant of Jesus Christ and that with a soul burning with missionary zeal he carried the gospel from frontier settlement to frontier settlement even to extreme old age. Perhaps Palmer, Hart and Sojourner were abler men, but none was more untiring in his labors, more devoted to the cause or more loyal to his convictions than Joseph Parker.

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[69] Morgan Edwards gives these dates, though he does not mention Parker in connection with the Falls of the Tar and Toisnot. Parker's having charge of the church at Fishing Creek may not seem consistent with Edwards' statement that this church was a daughter of Kehukee, but this statement may mean no more than that it later was in the Kehukee sphere of influence. It is not improbable that Parker had something of the pioneer spirit and was willing to leave a work already established as soon as some one appeared able to relieve him of it.

Though Parker was probably a native of the Province, it was a Virginian, William Sojourner, who became pastor of the next historical Baptist church organized in the Province, that of Kehukee, named from the creek by which it stands near the present town of Scotland Neck.[70] He had come to this section in 1742 and organized the church the same year. According to Knight, the historian of the General Baptists,[71] just previous to this time the people of Burleigh in the county of Isle of Wight, Virginia, had suffered from a "wasting, pestilential disease which carried off many of the inhabitants." Among the victims were not a few members of the General Baptist Church at that place which had been established twenty-five years before. Hoping to find a more healthy region, a number of the survivors, led by Elder William Sojourner, removed to Kehukee Creek in North Carolina.[72] On reaching the Kehukee they immediately built a meeting house and set up worship with Sojourner as their pastor. This house, still standing in 1772, was forty by twenty feet, at which time the church had 150 members.

Burkitt and Read do not so much as mention the name of Sojourner, but he is said by Mr. Edwards to have been "a most excellent man," and to have had the care of the church for about seven years, until his death on February 18, 1750.[73]

Several considerations lead to the belief that Sojourner was a man of much wisdom and influence as well as an active and energetic minister. During his short ministry he baptized several who afterwards became prominent preachers, among them William Walker, on August 9, 1746; John Moore in September, 1746; Edward Brown and Thomas Pope in 1749; he also assisted in the ordination of most of them. All these men were bred Churchmen and some of them were men of prominence in the Province.[74] During Mr. Sojourner's lifetime the Keehukee church was regarded as the leading church of all west of the Roanoke, and Morgan Edwards speaks of several churches as daughters of this church. Though Sojourner seems to have been a settled pastor rather than an evangelist he was all along baptizing ministers and sending them forth as missionaries, one of them as far as the Great Cohara in Sampson County. And he enjoyed the friendship and confidence of all, even of men like Dr. Josiah Hart, who had been in the Province before his coming to Kehukee.[75]

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[70] Morgan Edwards in his "Tour," etc., gives his name as Surgenor which would suggest that it was accented on the first syllable.

[71] *History of the General Baptists*, p. 317.

[72] Knight mentions no other reason than the desire to escape from an unhealthy place for the removal of Sojourner and his companions. But Hufham declares that Sojourner came in accord with the plan and on the invitation of Paul Palmer, who was probably dead in 1742.

[73] So I interpret the date 1749/50 as written by Mr. Edwards in his "Tour," etc. This means that under New Style, which was not adopted by law in North Carolina until 1754, the date is 1750.

Among all the General Baptists who labored in the gospel ministry in the Province of North Carolina none was more active and able than Dr. Josiah Hart. Our first record of him is in a General Court record of 1733.[76] We next find his name on a petition of certain Protestant Dissenters of Neuse and Pamlico rivers, dated April, 1742, and addressed to the Hon. James Montgomery, Chief Justice of the Province, asking for the right of worship, without interruption from constables, of which more account will be taken below. On this petition the name of Hart is followed by an abbreviation ending in D, which seems to indicate that he was some kind of a doctor. Perhaps as early as this he was already engaged in evangelical labors such as were to employ his later years. Morgan Edwards credits him with founding the church at Pungo in Beaufort County. Mr. Stewart, minister of the parish of Bath, writing in 1761, said that there had been large numbers of Baptists in that county for many years. These must be regarded as in part at least the fruit of the preaching of Hart. He seems to have gone west of the Roanoke about the same time as Sojourner. It is not known why he left Beaufort for Edgecombe, the Edgecombe of that day, whether on the invitation of Parker or Sojourner, or independently. But whatever the occasion it is certain that his purpose in going was to give the Gospel to the settlers along the frontier who were then utterly destitute of gospel privileges.

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[74] Mr. Moore was a large landholder and had been in Edgecombe for several years before the coming of Sojourner. *Colonial Records,* IV, 631f.

[75] Mr. Edwards' short sketch is as follows: "Rev. William Sojourner. He is said to have been a most excellent man; and to have had the care of the church about seven years. He died Feb. 18, 1749/50, aged 43 years and 7 months. This date I found on a cedar rail put over his grave by his surviving friend, Rev. Josiah Hart. His wife was Mary West (alias widow Boykin) by whom he had children, Jacob, Ann, Tamar."

[76] This is found in the files of the Historical Commission in Raleigh and reads: "Deposition of Ann Harrington, Spinster on Joseph Burket Killing hogs, Nicholas Purefoy, Josiah Hart."

When he had come to the region of Scotland Neck[77] he very early made the acquaintance of Sojourner and formed a friendship which lasted until the death of the latter. Hart, however, unlike Sojourner, was not a settled pastor but an evangelist. Making his headquarters in what is now Warren County, where he gathered a congregation called by Burkitt and Read Reedy Creek, but known until the end of the century as Fishing Creek, he began to put in operation an evangelistic program which enlisted the services of many able ministers and resulted in a wonderful development of the Baptist cause among the new inhabitants for many miles to the west and south.[78]

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[77] In 1772 Morgan Edwards speaks of him as Dr. Josiah Hart of Scotland Neck. This is the earliest occurrence of that name I have found in our Baptist annals. Probably Dr. Hart had already been dead several years in 1772.

[78] There were several churches and congregations called by the name of Fishing Creek. They were (1) Lower Fishing Creek, or Daniel's Meeting House, a few miles west of Enfield. This was the church which Morgan Edwards says was for eight years under the care of Rev. Joseph Parker, and in 1756 was transformed into a Particular Baptist Church by Rev. Thomas Pope. Its first minister, after the reformation, was Rev. Charles Daniel. It was dismissed by the Kehukee Association along with several other churches about 1830 or 1831 and became one of the constituent members of the Tar River Association, but returned

Dr. Hart either had baptized or ordained most of the preachers who labored with him. At Reedy Creek (Fishing Creek) in 1748 he and his deacons ordained Rev. William Walker to be pastor of the church. He had been baptized two years before at Kehukee. In the next year Hart baptized two others who became preachers, Henry Ledbetter and James Smart. These were ordained at Fishing Creek in 1750 by Elders William Walker and William Washington. In 1748 likewise he baptized the Rev. John Thomas at Toisnot, who later was ordained pastor of that church by Rev. George Graham and Rev. John Moore. About the same time Thomas's sons, Jonathan and John, became Baptist preachers also. In 1749 Hart baptized Charles

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to the Kehukee Association in 1838. See Hassell, *Church History,* pp. 729, 779. In this work it is called Daniel's Meeting House on Fishing Creek. See also Taylor, *History of the Tar River Association,* in which the Fishing Creek spoken of is erroneously conjectured to have been that in Warren County and connected in some way with Reedy Creek. (2) A congregation which was called by various names, New Meeting House, Cotton's, and finally Lawrence's Meeting House was near Fishing Creek a few miles south of Scotland Neck and according to Biggs, *Kehukee Association,* p. 275, note, was first called Fishing Creek. Burkitt and Read also refer to this congregation saying: "There is a connection between this church (Kehukee) and one on Fishing Creek, at the new meeting house, as it is called, which was originally gathered by Elder Tanner, but was never constituted a church as we know of. This congregation and the old Kehukee church became one body, and (in) the minutes of the Association have been considered as such, and the members on Fishing Creek have by the Association been deemed a branch of that church." p. 240. See also Hassell, *Church History,* p. 723. (3) Then there is the church in Warren which all the early writers on our Baptist history except Burkitt and Read know as Fishing Creek. See the *Minutes of the Kehukey Association* in No. 4, of the *James Sprunt Historical Monographs,* edited by K. P. Battle, years 1772-1777. So also Morgan Edwards. That Reedy Creek and this Fishing Creek are identical churches is rendered certain by the fact that the events which Morgan Edwards connects with Fishing Creek are connected by Burkitt and Read with Reedy Creek; the members of one are also the members of the other; and the pastor of the one, Rev. William Walker, was for the same years the pastor of the other, and the branches of the one, Sandy Creek, etc., are the branches of the other, or rather of the same church under different names; the location of Fishing Creek as given both in Morgan Edwards and in McAden's journal found in Foote's *Sketches* tallies exactly with the location of Reedy Creek. The stream Reedy Creek is a branch of Fishing Creek and though the present site of the church may not be exactly that of the first church it was near enough to Fishing Creek to explain its being called by that name.

Daniel and in 1753 assisted by Rev. Henry Ledbetter ordained him. Hart assisted Sojourner in the ordination of Rev. John Moore as pastor of the Falls of Tar Church in 1748. Another preacher of less note who was connected with the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church was Rev. Sam. Davis, in whose baptism and ordination Hart probably had a part. Associated with Hart at Fishing Creek was Rev. William Washington who had been baptized and ordained in Virginia. Other preachers with whom Hart had more remote relations were Rev. Jeremy Rhame of Red Banks, and Rev. George Graham of Bear Creek in Lenoir County and Rev. William Fulsher who became pastor of the church at Pungo. Both Graham and Fulsher had joined with Hart in signing the petition for freedom from molestation of their worship by officers of the law.

Hart seems to have led all this great assemblage of preachers and inspired them with something of his own missionary zeal. We may next consider their work in somewhat more detail and in the different churches which they established. By 1755, according to Morgan Edwards and Knight, the total number of General Baptist churches in the Province was sixteen. Of nearly every one of these the name has been preserved with some interesting account of events connected with it. These churches were, Pasquotank (Shiloh), Meherrin, Pungo, Kehukee, Bertie (Sandy Run), Fishing Creek (Daniel's Church), Fishing Creek (Walker's Church), Falls of Tar, Tar River, Flat River (?), Grassy Creek, Toisnot, Red Banks, Bear Creek, Flat Swamp (?), Swift Creek (Craven County), Great Cohara.

I have already said something of Pasquotank (Shiloh), Meherrin, Sandy Run, Lower Fishing Creek and Kehukee.

According to Burkitt and Read,[79] Hart and his fellow laborers, William Washington, Sam Davis, James Smart,

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[79] *Kehukee Association,* 229.

William Walker and Henry Ledbetter, had great success at Reedy Creek, and great numbers came and were baptized. Mr. Walker was ordained as their pastor though they had no close organization like that of the later Particular Baptist churches. Those who came and were baptized returned to their homes and hardly regarded themselves as members of the Reedy Creek church, but in their distant neighborhoods they were ready to welcome the preachers from the church and to join with any they might baptize into an independent congregation. Thus later and probably at this time Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) had branches at Benefield's Creek, 28 miles off; at Sandy Creek, 17 miles off; and at Giles' Creek 25 miles off. Before 1755 some of these preaching places had developed into independent churches. One of these was Tar River, which was twenty miles southwest of Reedy Creek.[80] This church was established in 1749. After it had become a Particular Baptist church in 1761 for a short time it had as its pastor Rev. William Washington who had probably been its pastor previously. Washington while still in Virginia had said that Churchmen were fools. For this prosecution was started against him in the Virginia Courts. Possibly this was the occasion of his coming to North Carolina, but the suit was transferred to the court at Enfield and on its going against him he was compelled to pay more than forty pounds.[81]

In this church Washington was succeeded by Rev. Henry Ledbetter. After becoming a Particular Baptist he had gone to Lynch's Creek, South Carolina, where he remained until 1757, at which time he returned to North Carolina and served as pastor at Flat River, which thus early was a branch of the Tar River church, and where at that time as later when Morgan Edwards was writing "meeting was kept in a school house."[82] Taking charge of the Tar River Church and its branches at the departure of Washington in 1761, Ledbetter remained here for many years. In 1777 "the church in Granville County, under the care of Elder Henry Ledbetter," became one of the constituent churches of Burkitt's United Association.[83]

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[80] So Foote. Account of McAden's journey through this section. In conformity with this is Morgan Edwards' statement.

[81] Morgan Edwards under head of William Washington. Such transfer of action from the courts of one province to those of another seems not to have been uncommon in those days. Turner and Bridgers, *History of Edgecombe County,* p. 61; in the case cited here the Superior Court at Enfield in 1767 issued a *scire facias* to collect money in Virginia.

Further north and west, at Grassy Creek in Granville County, was found another General Baptist congregation. McAden preached here also in August, 1755, where he found a meeting house and a people much interested in religion.

This Rev. Hugh McAden was a young Presbyterian minister who had recently graduated from what is now Princeton University, and who was making a tour through the Presbyterian settlements of North Carolina. Later he had pastorates, first at Rockfish in Duplin County, and then on the Hico in Caswell. His journal was used by Foote in his *Sketches of North Carolina.* Of several interesting sketches of the Baptists given therein the following relates to those of this section. As related by Foote it is as follows:

> Having been sent for and earnestly entreated to go to Tar River, I took my journey the same evening, (the evening of Tuesday, August 12, 1755) with my guide and rode (from Eno) to Bogan's, on Flat River, twenty miles. Next morning, (Wednesday, August 13, 1755), set off again, and rode to old Sherman's, on

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[82] Morgan Edwards' account of Rev. Henry Ledbetter is as follows: "Mr. Ledbetter was born, 17—, in Prince George County in Virginia. Bred a churchman. Embraced the principles of the Baptists, Feb. 1748/9; and had the ordinance administered to him by Rev. Josiah Hart of Scotland Neck, N. Carolina. Ordained Aug. 1750, along with Mr. Smart by Rev. Mess. Wm. Walker and William Washington. He was then a general baptist, but in about 6 months after embraced the Calvinistic doctrines. He came to Linches Creek in 1754 from Welsh tract. In 1757 he went to Flat River in North Carolina. He married Edy Clark by whom he has children Joel, Jaene, William."

[83] *Kehukee Association,* p. 47.

> Tar River, and preached that afternoon to a small company, who seemed generally attentive, and some affected.

Next day (Thursday, August 14), says Foote, he went to Grassy Creek, sixteen miles, where was a Baptist meeting-house, and preached to a people "who were very inquisitive about the way to Zion." The next day (Friday, August 15) he accompanied his host, old Mr. Lawrence, to Fishing Creek (that is Reedy Creek) to the Baptist Yearly Meeting; and on Saturday and Sabbath preached to large and deeply interested audiences. "Here I think the power of God appeared something conspicuous, and the word seemed to fall with power." Being earnestly pressed, he preached again on Sabbath afternoon, with some hope of success. On Monday he preached again with greater appearance of usefulness. The inhabitants, he was informed, were principally from Virginia, and some from Pennsylvania and Jersey. "I was obliged to leave them after I had preached to and exhorted them with many words, that they should carefully guard against taking shelter under the shadow of their own righteousness, committing them to God, who, I know, is able to make them wise unto salvation." On Monday, p.m., the 18th, he rode to Mr. Sherman's, on Tar River, at about 11 o'clock, twenty miles; and preached in the afternoon "to a middling congregation, who appeared very devout, and some of them much affected." On Wednesday, returned to Mr. Anderson's, on Eno.

The following is from Mr. Foote's account of Mr. McAden's journal on his journey northward in April, 1756:

> On the 7th day of April, Wednesday, after sermon, he rode to Mr. Barrow's, about five miles; and the next day, about five or six miles to Red Banks, "where I preached to a pretty large company of various sorts of people, but fewer Presbyterians." In the evening rode up the river, ten miles, to Mr. Mace's, who is a man of considerable note, and a Presbyterian." Here he remained till Sabbath, the 11th, and preached in the neighborhood.
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> On Tuesday, April 13th, he set out homeward, and rode twenty

> miles, to Mr. Toole's, on Tar River; this man he described as unhappy in his notions of unbelief. On Wednesday, he rode thirty miles, to Edgecombe court-house (now Enfield); the next day he reached Fishing Creek, about twenty-five miles; and on Friday, he rode about ten miles up the creek, and was kindly received by the Baptist friends he made through the country last fall. On Sabbath, the 18th, he preached at their meeting house. Here many came to converse with him about their experience. On the next day he went home with Joseph Linsey, who had heard him preach.
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> "He insisted very hard upon me to stay at Nut Bush, and give them a sermon, as they were very destitute and out of the way. I went home with him, about twenty-two miles, it being pretty much in my way, and preached." He found them a cheerful people, without the regular preaching of the gospel, and in a situation as might be expected, with an abundance of wealth, and full leisure for enjoyment.

To the south of Fishing Creek (Daniel's Meeting House) in the present limits of Rocky Mount is still to be found a church called the Falls of the Tar, which has existed from the year 1744. Mr. Edwards who gives that date does not say who first preached the gospel here, but it was probably Joseph Parker, or his fellow laborers. On October 30, 1748, Elder John Moore was ordained as its minister. Born in Virginia in 1717, according to Morgan Edwards, and bred a Churchman, he had probably come to North Carolina about 1740. His life had been marked by sobriety from his early youth. He was about 29 years of age when he was baptized. Two years later he entered upon his long and worthy course as a minister, first as a General Baptist, and after 1757 as a Particular Baptist, and at his death left a son of the same name and another son named Lewis to continue the work he had begun. Later and perhaps in the General Baptist period this church had a branch at the mouth of Swift Creek, fifteen miles off.

To the south of the Tar, in the present county of Wilson is a church called Toisnot.[84] It is not known who first preached the gospel here or organized the congregation. It had no minister until 1748 when Dr. Josiah Hart came on one of his missionary tours and baptized John Thomas, who soon after was ordained pastor of the Toisnot church by Elders George Graham and John Moore. This John Thomas was probably the one of that name who in 1749 was appointed a justice of the peace for Edgecombe County.[85] He had two sons who also became ministers, the one named John and the other Jonathan, the latter being "a great man of God, very affable in his address and a great orator." Of all these I shall have more to say later under the head of the Kehukee Association. But while they were still General Baptists they seem to have done a great work among the people living in every direction from Toisnot, probably preaching as far west as Roger's Cross Roads in the present county of Wake and in Johnston and further east. Morgan Edwards represents that Little Contentnea under the pastoral care of Elder Joseph Parker was a branch of Toisnot. Since Contentnea continued a General Baptist church such relationship could have begun and continued only while both were of that order. Accordingly, it must have been organized several years before Elder Joseph Parker baptized Joshua Vining here in 1761.

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[84] Edwards writes the name Tosneot; Burkitt and Read, Tosniot. Tosneoc seems to have been the original spelling. It was the name of a

Further east at Red Banks, in Pitt County, where there is still a Primitive Baptist church, Jeremy Rhame became the pastor of a Particular Baptist church in 1758. We have seen that a congregation was found here by Rev. Hugh McAden on his journey north as he was finishing his tour of the Province early in 1756.[86]

In the same county around Flat Swamp, there were after the transformation to the Particular Baptist order in 1755 the remnants of a General Baptist congregation which hav-

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principal village of the Tuscarora Indians until 1712, and also of a swamp and creek which flows from it. Bridgers and Turner, *Hist. of Edgecombe County,* p. 13.

[85] *Colonial Records,* IV, 966.

[86] Foote, *Sketches,* p. 174. See above, p. 179.

ing no pastor was wholly disorganized but still considerable. They were still numerous in this section even after 1766, when "the Spirit of the Lord began to breathe upon some of the dry bones in the valley of Flat Swamp," and under the preaching of Rev. Jonathan Thomas a Particular Baptist church was organized. Burkitt and Read, who could hardly speak of the General Baptists with respect, represented them as ready, when some disorder arose in the Flat Swamp church, "to look out of their dens where they had been driven by the refulgent beams of gospel truth"; but powerless to do much harm since the members of the Flat Swamp church were well acquainted with their doctrine before their conversion from it.[87] Still another General Baptist church was Bear Creek in the present county of Lenoir. The date of its constitution is unknown, but according to Morgan Edwards it belonged to the General Baptists until 1756, when it was reconstituted as a Particular Baptist church by Miller and Van Horn with Rev. George Graham as pastor, who in all probability had served as such under the General Baptist order.

Thanks to Morgan Edwards, we now know that one of the earliest of the General Baptist churches was at Swift's Creek, twelve miles westwardly from New Bern, perhaps the identical church on a petition for building which those Baptists were prosecuted at New Bern in 1740, and of which an account will be found later in this chapter. Mr. Edwards' account of this church has several points of much interest.[88] The first pastor of the Pasquotank church, the

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[87] *History of the Kehukee Association*, p. 213.

[88] "Swift's-Creek. So called from a branch (near to which the meeting house stands) which empties into the Neuse, in Craven county, 12 miles NbW from Newburn, and .... SSW from Philadelphia. The families about 150 whereof about 72 persons are baptized and in communion.—This their present state.—They originated by means Rev. Wm Burges of Pasquotank who in .... preached in these parts and baptized many in the general scheme; but in 1756 were visited by Rev. Mess. Benj. Miller and P. P. van Horn, who prosylited the following persons and formed them into a church Feb. 27 the same year. Their names were Joseph Willis, George Fisher, Abraham Warrin, James Willis, Samuel

Rev. William Burges, came to Swift's Creek on a missionary journey and worked with much success. It is indicative of what the number of their converts would suggest, that the early General Baptists preached far and wide and often with much success in all eastern North Carolina. In many instances they found no one able to carry on the work they had begun and no church was organized. But in other places churches were organized and fell apart because of lack of pastors. It is only of those churches which survived and were proselyted by the Particular Baptists that we hear. An examination of the account of Mr. Edwards will reveal the method pursued by the missionaries of the Particular Baptists in their work of transformation of these General Baptist churches to their own order. First they gained the minister and then a few of the members and took charge of the organization. I will speak of this at greater length below.

The furthest church south of the General Baptists of which we have any record was that of Great Cohara. According to Edwards, this was gathered by Rev. Edward Brown, who was baptized by Rev. William Sojourner at Kehukee in 1749 and being ordained the same year came and settled on the Great Cohara. Ten years later the church was transformed to the Particular Baptist order by means of Revs. Jonathan Thomas, Thomas Pope and Stephen Hollingsworth, and Rev. Edward Brown was continued as pastor. In the transformation he was able to carry with him only twelve of the considerable number he had baptized.

Such were the ministers and churches of the General Baptists in North Carolina of which we have definite con-

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Willis, James Perdieu, Jacob Miller, Elizabeth Wane, Mary Fisher, Susanna Willis, Mary Warren, Mary Miller.—The first minister is the present Rev. Joseph Willis. He was ordained by Mess. George Graham and William Fulsher and at the same time became minister of this church. His wife is Eliz. Simmons by whom he has children Mary, Joseph, Thomas, Caleb, Richard, Jesse, Ephraim.

temporary documentary evidence. It is not open to question that these preachers had many other places at which they preached more or less regularly, but it was not in accord with the plan of Morgan Edwards or Burkitt and Read to give any account of them. Nor has any one else hitherto made any serious attempt to trace the extent of their work. We shall be more able to understand how easily knowledge of it was lost if we remember its character. The ministers traveled, preached and baptized. All persons they baptized were considered Christians and Baptists though not necessarily members of any local church; when a sufficient number of these were found in any neighborhood they would form a loosely organized group which, if it had a local preacher, became an independent church, but if it had no such preacher, it remained a branch of some other church. Nearly always such a congregation, as that at Grassy Creek, would build a meeting house so that services might be had in any kind of weather. But in some of the preaching points the Baptist converts were too few or too widely scattered to make any organization possible.

From the account given above it will be seen that the General Baptists had their greatest success to the west and south of the Roanoke. In this period this section had filled up with inhabitants. In 1754 Edgecombe County which then included the present counties of Halifax, Warren, Franklin, Nash and part of Wilson, had become by far the most populous county in the Province, having 1,611 white taxables, while Bertie was next with 1,220. Most of the inhabitants had come from the Albemarle and from Virginia. The greater number were of the class of small farmers, but there were also many slaveholders, who, owning plantations of thousands of acres and having large numbers of slaves, exercised a strong social and political influence. In Edgecombe at this time one-third of the inhabitants were negro slaves; about the same proportion held in Northampton, while in Bertie and Granville not more than one-fifth of the inhabitants were slaves and in Orange there were hardly fifty. All these new settlements were open fields for the Baptist preachers. Until several years after Sojourner had come to Kehukee there were preachers of no other denomination to be found except in the extreme eastern counties. It was the Baptist preachers then that had the responsibility no less than the privilege of giving these people the gospel. They were first on the ground and had already gone far with their evangelizing work when the first minister of the Church of England came and settled here. This was the Rev. James Moir, who, tiring of his difficult and unappreciated work on the Cape Fear, without obtaining leave of his superiors in London, came to Edgecombe and began his ministry at Easter, 1747.[89] On his arrival he learned that many of the Churchmen had been much "pestered" by Baptist preachers, and that many had turned Baptists, as he supposed, for want of a clergyman of the Established Church. But though Moir did a very successful work and gained much political influence in the county by his resistance to the measures of Governor Dobbs, he caused no abatement in the increase of the Baptists in this section.[90] William Reckitt, a traveling Quaker who made a journey through the settlements of eastern North Carolina in 1756-57, found that the inhabitants of Edgecombe were principally of the Baptist faith.[91] The General Baptist preachers were keeping pace with the tide of population as it advanced westwards from the Atlantic seaboard. Mc-

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[89] *Colonial Records,* IV, 795, 876, 878, 923.

[90] For Moir's political influence see Turner and Bridgers, *History of Edgecombe County,* p. 56ff. See also *Colonial Records,* IV, 876, VI, 1710; VII, 102f., from which it appears that Governors Johnston, Dobbs and Tryon all speak of Moir with disparagement. On the other hand Moir was as bold in expressing his opinion of the Governors.

[91] Weeks. *Southern Quakers and Slavery,* p. 90. "There were few Friends, but people of other societies came in." . . . "Then they came to Henry Horn's in Edgecombe County, who had been converted from among the Baptists, for the inhabitants of this section belonged principally to that faith."

Aden in 1755 and 1756 found their converts at Grassy Creek and on the upper Cape Fear, and they already had a church as far south as the Great Cohara.

In general, they had prosecuted their labors without let or hindrance. But in a few instances they met with pronounced opposition by overzealous Churchmen, of which I here give account.

At this time the laws of England, so far as they applied to Dissenters, were doubtfully considered to be in force in North Carolina.[92] Certainly for the most part such laws were never appealed to here. Such acts as had been passed by our own Assembly seemed to require no other conformity to the English laws on Toleration than those which were stated in the acts themselves. But, as we have seen, the Church in the house of William Burges, on September 5, 1729, filed in the court of Pasquotank a petition to have their meeting legally sanctioned. Paul Palmer likewise in 1738 filed a like petition with the court. Later, in 1761, Jonathan Thomas filed a like petition with the court of Edgecombe County, which was endorsed by two other Baptist preachers, Rev. George Graham and Rev. John Moore. In the same way the Presbyterian meeting house at Cathey's settlement in western Rowan and that of Dr. Caldwell at Buffalo in what is now the White Oak section of Greensboro were registered with the Rowan Court in 1770 and 1771.[93] So far as I know, there are no other records of such registrations in North Carolina. Registration though not general, in some instances was desirable as it secured freedom from legal molestation.

In and around New Bern in 1740 there were living a number of Baptists, either those who had been such before coming to the Province or were converts of Paul Palmer,

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[92] Not even in Virginia where Baptist preachers suffered so much from legal persecution was it ever definitely decided that the laws of England as to Dissenters had proper application. See Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, p. 32.

[93] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 227, 507.

William Burges and Dr. Hart, all of whom, as we have seen, were about this time preaching in this section. Stimulated perhaps by the building of the Episcopal church which was projected in New Bern at this time, the Baptists thought to build a church for themselves. With a desire doubtless both to conform with any possible law and to secure immunity from prosecution, they brought a petition for registration before the Craven County Court of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas at the June term of the court in 1740. The leaders and spokesmen of these Baptists, described in the court records as "first day anabaptists" and "first day baptists," were John James, William Fulsher, Francis Ayers, Lemuel Harvey, Nicholas Purefoy, and John Brooks. In a later petition the names of Thomas Fulsher and Robert Spring also appear. Of these Purefoy and the two Fulshers seem to have been farmers, since the records show that they petitioned for patents for land in Craven.[94] John James was a citizen of New Bern. As late as the year 1900 the dwelling house he had erected and was occupying in 1740 was still standing just across the street from the residence of Major John D. Whitford and near the center of the town.[95]

The justices whose names appear in connection with the petition of these Baptists for registration of their church were George Roberts, John Bryan, James Maclwain, Thomas Pearson, Daniel Shine, Thomas Masters, Joseph Hannis, John Powel, John Simons. Roberts was a church commissioner, commissary of troops, and a prominent member of the General Assembly; John Bryan was a man of business, a ship-owner, a contractor, having been paid a few years later six thousand dollars for building the small jail in New Bern, and later was sheriff; Maclwain was a large landowner and a member of the Assembly; Thomas Pearson was Capital Commissioner, Tax Collector and a member of the Assembly; all the others were members of the Assembly and prominent in other ways.[96]

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[94] *Colonial Records,* IV, 711, 815.

[95] Major Whitford's manuscript history of New Bern Baptists in library of N. C. State Historical Commission.

The petitioners first came before the court on the afternoon of Thursday, June 19, 1740, when George Roberts, Daniel Shine, Thomas Masters, John Bryan and Joseph Hannis were sitting as the court. The petition seems to have struck the justices with dismay. Here were a set of "Anabaptist" Dissenters proposing to erect a rival church to the one they were erecting by public taxation. It must never be allowed if it was possible to prevent it. For three days the court labored to find some way to justify a denial to these Baptists of a right guaranteed them by the Toleration Act, as well as by the Act of Assembly of 1715, and finding none brought charges of misdemeanors against them and disregarded their petition. The court records tell all the ugly tale. At the first hearing, indeed, the court voted to grant the petition "so far as the Toleration law will allow." But even this cautious judgment was struck out and the case was "referred till to-morrow . . . that the law be produced." On Friday the court considered the petition at both its morning and afternoon session, and did not finally dispose of it until Saturday. There was no longer any question of the right to build the church, and some other way had to be sought to frustrate the purpose of the petitioners. Accordingly, as is shown by the court records, "Rees Price, William Carruthers, and John Bryan, Esq., made oath to several misdemeanors committed by the said petitioners contrary to and in contempt of the laws now in force." Upon which it is ordered by this court that the "said petitioners be bound by recognizance for their appearance at the next Court of Assize and Gaol Delivery to be held in this town, then and there to answer such things as they shall be charged with and in the meantime to be of good behavior to all his majesty's liege people." All six of the petitioners, John James, William Fulsher, Francis Ayres, Samuel Harvey, Nicholas Purefoy, John Brooks, then gave bond for forty pounds each, with the bond of each secured by two of the other petitioners with bonds for twenty pounds each.

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[96] These statements may be verified by reference to the *Colonial Records.*

It is to be observed that it was not to the county court that the petitioners were bound over, but to the Court of Assize and Gaol Delivery. This was a general court of the Province, which for many years had met only at Edenton, but owing to a change of the laws, was now to meet at towns throughout the Province at times appointed by the Governor and his Council. The records show that at first the uncertain justices required a bond of each of the petitioners to appear at the next session of their own court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions which was to meet at New Bern in the following September, and not to answer charges, but to keep the peace. As the justices' court contains no further reference to these bonds it is probable that they were regarded as canceled by the bonds for appearance at the general court.

With the giving of these bonds the record ends. There is no further reference to the case either in the records of the county court, which are fairly complete, nor in the incomplete records of the general Court of Assize and Gaol Delivery.[97] We are left wholly to conjecture as to what happened when the matter came before the General Court; in all probability the cases against the petitioners were dismissed.

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[97] The records of the New Bern Court are to be found in the files of the N. C. Historical Commission at Raleigh. For the period of the court in which the petition was offered there are two sets of records: one the first rough draft as made by the clerk while the court was in session; the other the notes copied in amended form in the court record book. These were originally separate but have now been bound in one book. The records for the case of the petitioners are not identical in all respects. The first draft indicates that the case was continued through Saturday and that the bonds were for appearance at the county court; the second draft records the bonds as of Friday, June 20, and as requiring appearance at the General Court.

Of course, the disposition of the cases depended on the nature of the misdemeanors charged against the petitioners. Rev. L. C. Vass, in his *History of the New Bern Presbyterian Church*, supposed that the petitioners had been holding services without complying with the Act of Toleration, and that if they had so been holding services "they were properly required to give recognizances, and there was no unseemly usage under the law." That their so-called misdemeanors were of such a nature is hardly open to question, for it is impossible to conceive of any other law which five men of the character of the petitioners could have joined in repeatedly violating. But that they were properly required to give recognizances cannot be maintained. If so, the petitioners for the church at the house of William Burges, and those for the Presbyterian churches at Cathey's settlement and at Big Buffalo, which I have mentioned above, should also have been charged with misdemeanors and required to give recognizances, for in all these cases it is evident that the petitioners had been meeting for worship before they brought their petitions before the court. The petitioners at New Bern like those at the other places were showing a willingness and purpose to comply with the law. They had been worshiping God. As the Fulshers were preachers they had probably been preaching the gospel to a people who would not have heard it from any one else. But after they had brought their petition before the court, and the justices had inspected the Toleration Act, it was seen that technically the petitioners could be charged with a violation of the Act since they had been previously holding religious services. Accordingly, the justices, seeking for some excuse to deny them their rights under the Act, allowed the indictments to be made and one member of the court joined in making them. They put the petitioners in jeopardy of their property and liberty and used their position as justices of the peace not to protect the citizens in their rights but to defraud them of them. Their animus is unmistakable. It was petty, mean religious hostility against those of another sect whose activity they were trying to repress.

Something may be said of the three witnesses who made the charges against the petitioners. All three of them, John Bryan, William Carruthers, and John Powel, one of the justices who sat in the court, are shown by the evidence of the *Colonial Records* to have been corrupt men. Shortly after this they were required by Governor Johnston and his Council to resign "their commission of the peace for the County of Craven," since it appeared on evidence, to be found in the *Colonial Records*, that they "had acted with great partiality on the seat of justice."[98]

But though bound over to court the Baptists did not rest. When the court next met for its September term, 1740, they were ready with another petition. But there was a different group of petitioners and their petition was different. Three of the former petitioners, William Fulsher, Lemuel Harvey and Francis Ayers, were not present, but Thomas Fulsher and Rober tSpring joined with Nicholas Purefoy, John Brooks, and John James in making a petition not to build a church, as in the former petition, but "praying the benefit of the act commonly called the act of Toleration." As thus worded the petition was granted, but not before the petitioners had undergone an examination and taken the so-called test oath. I am giving here the minute of the court as it illustrates the narrow limits in which dissent from the Established church was confined:

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[98] *Colonial Records,* IV, 677. In this record the names of John Carruthers and William Carruthers are confused; possibly it was the former who was required to resign and not the latter.

> The following Desenting Protestants appeared vitz John Brooks John James Robt Spring Nich Purify and Thos Fulcher came into court and took the Oathes of alegiance and Supremacy and Subscribed to the Tests and the thirty-Nine articles of religion being distinctly read to them the following of which they desented from to-wit the Thirty-Sixth and the latter part of the Twenty-Seventh.
>
> *The Test*
>
> I, A. B., do declare that I do believe that there is not any Transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or in the Elements of Bread and Wine at or after the Consecration thereof by any person whatsoever.

The articles to which the Baptists were allowed to dissent were those approving infant baptism and acknowledging the truth of all written in the homilies. The test oath was intended primarily for Roman Catholics.

In connection with the indictment of these New Bern Baptists and their binding over to the higher court to answer for misdemeanors and to the lower court to keep the peace, is the well established tradition that certain of them were publicly whipped or imprisoned or both. The men who were reported to have suffered in this way were James Brinson, Nicholas Purefoy and William Fulsher. In the documents that we now have there is no record of any case at all against Brinson, and none of punishment such as indicated for any of the three.[99] But the evidence is strong that such a record once existed and disappeared after controversy over the matter arose. Vass makes this statement with reference to it:

> It is further claimed by eminent citizens of New Bern that there was a record, which has mysteriously disappeared from the Clerk's Office, which certified that certain persons, viz., Messrs. Brinson, Fulshire and Purifoy, were indicted for holding to the

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[99] Brinson became active many years later. He was possibly subject to persecution in the case mentioned by Morgan Edwards in 1768, but not in 1740. According to Vass, *History of the Presbyterian Church in New Bern,* p. 81, there were duplicate copies of the records of the court, one kept in a bound volume, the other in a set of bound manuscripts. In the Archives of the Historical Commission at Raleigh both sets are at present bound in one volume.

> *"Baptist faith,"* and were whipped, and imprisoned for three months in Craven County jail. One gentleman proposes to make affidavit to the fact that he read that record, shown to him by the Clerk, Mr. James Stanly.

On examination of the records in 1893 Rev. J. T. Albritton and Dr. Columbus Durham reported that they found evidence of mutilations, in some places a half leaf, in other a full leaf and in other two or three leaves having been torn or cut out.[100] The records as now bound in the archives of the N. C. Historical Commission show some signs of purposeful mutilation.

Such a record seems to have been seen also by Mr. H. S. Nunn, editor of the New Bern *Journal* in 1883. Rev. J. T. Albritton had made a statement in a public address that Baptists had been fined, whipped and imprisoned at New Bern. This statement had been challenged. Accordingly, Mr. Albritton wrote to Mr. Nunn asking that he examine the records and publish his findings, which he did, making the following statement in the issue of his paper for September 6, 1883:

> In looking over the old dusty records in the Register's office, we find an entry in the minute docket of the county court of 1741, noting the application by Baptists to be allowed to build a church in Newbern. Instead of granting the application these applicants were all publicly whipped, bound over to keep the peace, and required to give bonds for their good behavior, and also to take the test oath.[101]

In view of these facts it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the court records once contained a statement of the punishment of these men. And that they were so punished is confirmed by a well established tradition. The descendants of the men said to have suffered punishment strongly believe it. Col. J. D. Whitford, who was a native of New Bern, born in 1818, and who made his home there all his life and was a man of undoubted integrity, always took much interest in the history of his native town. In 1882 he wrote a series of articles on the early history of New Bern for the New Bern *Journal,* in which he spoke of the imprisonment of Nicholas Purefoy and other Baptists "for holding the Baptist faith," and went on to say: "They were held in jail for three months and were stronger in their faith when the doors of the jail were unlocked than when they were locked up."[102]

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[100] *Biblical Recorder,* Aug. 9, 1893.

[101] Copied in the *Biblical Recorder* of Aug. 9, 1893.

As this statement was made before controversy over the matter had arisen it is free from the imputation of partisan bias. But after the matter had been discussed by Weeks and others, Colonel Whitford in 1899 made a further statement which traces the tradition back almost to the time the whipping and imprisonment are supposed to have taken place. He had it from David Whitford, a grandson of Nicholas Purefoy by his daughter Mary Purefoy. This David Whitford was born on August 9, 1764, and died at the age of eighty-four in the year 1848. Up to the hour of his death of apoplexy he had been in vigorous health. Speaking of him Major Whitford says:

> He was a Baptist and thoroughly conversant with the treatment of the old Baptists, the information having come directly down to him from his ancestors. He was a deliberate, cautious man in his statements on any subject, and not unlike the old Baptist fathers, for a change of an honest opinion, would have had to have been trepanned. He did not entertain a doubt about the punishment of some of the Baptists with both fine and imprisonment.[103]

As shameful as was this punishment (of which the proof seems to be all but absolute), whether by fine, imprisonment or whipping, of these men whose only crime was a method of worship not approved by the courts, hardly less shameful is the undeniable fact that several of the most prominent citizens of Craven County brought prosecutions contemplating these very penalties for these men with the evident purpose of silencing them in their effort to proclaim a saving gospel to a destitue people. Equally as shameful is the fact that a North Carolina court should have so heartily coöperated with the prosecutors by denying these men the right they had even under the laws of England to establish their worship, and by way of revenge should have put them under heavy bonds, not only to appear at the Court of Gaol Delivery, but also under the like heavy bond to keep the peace, as if they were common criminals. Probably by keeping the peace was meant that they should no longer undertake to worship since the court refused to grant their petition. In this way they thought to put an end to the activities of a people that were undertaking to build a church even as members of the Church of England with the aid of public taxes were building one in the town of New Bern. But so long as the royal government continued in North Carolina, the officers of that government, from the Governor down, and all the missionaries of the Church of England who were working in the Province manifested this same intolerance and animosity against the Baptists especially of all Christians, and unmistakably regarded the destruction of the progress of the Baptists no less desirable than the evangelization and instruction of those who were wholly without religious advantages and church connection. And most regrettable of all, this spirit extended not only to the officers of the Government and the Church but also pervaded the membership, especially those who were men of education and influence, and bred in them an intolerant contempt for the humbler Christians who dared to differ with them in matters of belief.

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[102] Editorial in *Biblical Recorder* of July 26, 1893.

[103] From Whitford's manuscript *History of N. C. Baptists* in the archives of the N. C. Historical Commission.

Nor is the prosecution at New Bern the only instance of such intolerance. The enemies of the Baptists, under the show of law, continued to harass them, but now the scene of their hostile actions shifted from New Bern to Beaufort and Pamlico counties along Bay and Neuse rivers. Our next record of it bears date of April 25, 1742, and consists of a petition of Dissenters to the Chief Justice. In the meantime George Whitefield had visited New Bern in his wonderful missionary travels. But his great gospel sermons had done little to make the enemies of the Baptists more charitable towards them. Nor had they brought to them a keener sense of duty to their own church.

An indication of the religious conditions of those in this section at that time may be found in a letter of Rev. John Garzia, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel resident at Bath. It was written only nine days before the date of the petition mentioned above, being dated "No. Carolina Bath Town April 15: 1742." Omitting the first paragraphs, the letter is as follows:

> I do beg the favor of you to inform their Honors with my endeavors to promote goodness, christianity and true religion among the inhabitants within my mission, but immorality is arrived to that head among so many, that it requires not only some time but great patience to conquer it; because upon my preaching upon prevalent and predominant sin, I must be prepared to stand the persecution of those who are guilty of it, especially in my resident parish, in which adultery, incest, blasphemy, and all kinds of profaneness have got such deep root.
>
> I shall be more large in my next. In the meantime I stand the oppression of an inveterate and obstinate parish, governed by twelve vestrymen, whose only endeavor is to hinder and obstruct the service of God being performed, they themselves never coming to hear the word of God, and dissuading as much as possible others from it, and who in a particular manner exercise their malice daily against me, by depriving me of my quietness of mind and the enjoyment of the small salary of £37:10s per annum allowed by law, and which I am obliged to have recourse to recover, having had nothing these four years for the support of my family but what is allowed me by the Honorable Society, for whom my humble prayers to God, and my humble respect to your Reverence and begging a continuance of your favor, am, &c.[104]

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[104] *Colonial Records*, IV, 604f.

When two years later this faithful man of God had died his widow, said by Rev. Clement Hall to be in low circumstances on account of her husband's salary not being paid, was sold out of house and home and in her distress had to appeal to the Society to help her maintain herself and her three little children, while those who, as we shall see were so ready to prosecute Dissenters, lifted not a finger in her behalf.[105] There was much truth in the statement of Rev. James Moir, another missionary, at this time living at Wilmington where conditions were similar to those at Bath, that "No Province in America as far as I can learn has more need of missionaries and none can deserve them less."[106] Shortly before this time Whitefield had been at New Bern, where he preached on Christmas day, 1739. "Here he was grieved to see the minister encouraging dancing and to find a dancing master in every little town," thinking that, "such sinful entertainments enervate the minds of the people, and insensibly lead them into effeminacy and ruin." In general he thought North Carolina at this time to be "the greatest waste and the most uncultivated of spots, both in a temporal and spiritual sense."[107]

Amid people of this kind, "a wild and barbarous people," as Governor Johnston called them, it is not surprising to find officers like them. As they looked on without concern while the missionary of their own church and his poor wife and little children starved, so they were ready to go beyond the law to shut the mouth of dissenting ministers who were calling the people to repentance. Of this there is ample evidence in the petition mentioned above. It was from the Protestant Dissenters of Bay and Neuse rivers and was addressed to the Honorable John Montgomery, Chief Justice of the Province.[108]

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[105] *Colonial Records,* IV, 872-73.

[106] *Colonial Records,* IV, 607.

[107] Gillies, *Life of Whitefield,* 44.

[108] Mr. Montgomery, later Chief Justice, was at this time Acting-Chief Justice in place of Wm. Smith who had gone to England. *Colonial Records,* IV, 591.

It sets forth that the petitioners have been often interrupted in their public meetings and finally debarred from meeting together for want of a registered meeting-house, as the law directs. In June, 1741, they had addressed a humble petition to the county court held at Bath to have a house at Bay River registered as a place of public worship, but the court had not allowed it though it was a privilege to which they were legally entitled. Hence, they are coming to the Chief Justice as children to a father, humbly praying that he will consider their petition and grant that they may have the house of Mr. Robert Spring and the house of Mr. Nathaniel Draper at Flea Point as registered houses of worship; it being a reasonable request, agreeable to the laws of the land.[109]

It is to be observed that while the petition purports to come from Protestant Dissenters, yet, as the names of the signers indicate, they were either altogether or predominantly Baptist Dissenters. Among the signers were William and Thomas Fulsher, Nicholas Purefoy, Robert Spring, and Lemuel Harvey (Lamuel Harvy), five men who were petitioners at the New Bern court. Josiah Hart was the great Baptist evangelist and George Graham a Baptist preacher. The two other Fulshers were without doubt Baptists. Here we have a total of nine out of twenty-three, and in the nine are included the names of three Baptist preachers. What disposition was made of the petition is not known, although it is not conceivable that it was not granted.

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[109] Records of the General Court, N. C. Historical Commission, *Historical and Genealogical Register,* II, 198. It reads: "Petition from the Protestant Dissenters of Bay and Neuse Rivers.

"North Carolina Ss.

"To the Honourable John Montgomery, Esq., Chief Justice of this Province.

"We your Honours, Petitioners Protestant dissenters, Inhabitants of Bay River and Nuse River humbly shew that we your honour's petitioners have been often interrupted & finally debarred meeting together in Bath County for want of a Registered Meeting-house in said County, as the Law directs.

Therefore in order for accomplishing the same, we addressed the county court held in Bath in June last with our humble petition for a house at Bay River to be Registered for our Publick Worship, which although the law allows us that privilege yet it was Refused. Therefore as Children to a father, for Relief, so we come to your honour, humbly praying that your honour would be graciously pleased to treat our petition & grant us the house of Mr. Robert Spring & the house of Mr. Nathaniel Draper at Flea Point, formerly belonging to Mr. Amos Cutrel, that we may have the sd houses Registered for places of public Worship; it being a Reasonable request agreeable to the Laws of the Land. We doubt not but your honour will in Justice grant us our Request, your honour's compliance herein shall be thankfully acknowledged by your honour's poor petitioners & very humble Servants, and in duty bound will ever pray. April 25, 1742. (Signed) John Pearce, Lazarus Pearce, James Jones, Benjamin Fullsher, Joseph Fulsher, Wm. Fulsher, Nathan'l Draper, Thomas Lewis, Nicholas Purefoy, Thos. Fulsher, Wm. Robinson, Jno. Jacob Grinder, Samuel Willis, Geo. Graham, Robert Spring, Amos Cutrell, Jno. Jacob Hoover, Jno. West, Josiah Hart, J. H. D., John Church, Abraham Warren, Lemuel Harvey, James Purser.

We must not fail to observe one significance of the petition: it shows that the Baptists were much more numerous in this section at this time than has hitherto been supposed. In addition to the petition for the meeting-house in New Bern they were now asking for two other registered meeting-houses in one county. And, if the Baptists were numerous in this section, it is hardly open to question that they were also numerous in many other sections of the Province about which we have no information. By the labors of Paul Palmer, Joseph Parker, Josiah Hart, and other Baptist evangelists eastern North Carolina as far south as Great Cohara had become the home of numerous Baptist congregations.

In the absence of other preachers except the three or four Parish ministers and the rather inactive Quakers, the General Baptists had labored effectually among the inhabitants as far west as Granville and as far South as the Great Cohara. It was their preachers alone who had laid the obligations and precepts of the Christian religion on the hearts of most of these people, and kept them from falling into irreligion. It was no little work they did; it is deserving of higher appreciation than has been accorded it by Morgan Edwards and Burkitt and Read. This will become the more evident when the political, social, moral and religious conditions of many of the settlers is considered. During the latter years of Governor Johnston's administration, from 1746 to 1752, the counties composing the Albemarle region were in a state of revolt, and justly so, against the government, in what is known as the "Unarmed Rebellion." They had their county courts but no courts for the punishment of felonies. In this time the people of Edgecombe and other counties in Lord Granville's district were already showing that restlessness under the unjust and iniquitous exactions of his agents that finally resulted in open riot and rebellion. While the sense of these wrongs and the purpose to resist them united the people politically, yet for the most part they were too widely scattered to feel any responsibility to one another and the community for the maintenance of proper moral and religious standards. It was only where some especially fertile lands, such as were to be found along certain streams, had attracted a more compact settlement that any community life was possible. Furthermore, the settlers even in the most favored places had little to incite them to habits of thrift and industry. This was due largely to the lack of such market facilities as would make it profitable for the farmer to raise more than was necessary to supply his own needs. An observant traveler who passed through this part of the Province in 1752-53 said that the older inhabitants tended to become indolent and sluggish. This he attributed to the fact that they had no market in the Province for their produce and were forced to carry their tobacco and surplus pork to Virginia where the merchant paid what price he pleased and always one that left the farmer no profit. The same traveler also observed that among the new inhabitants, who were coming in great numbers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, New England and Great Britain, were a few who were refugees from other Provinces, some who had abandoned wives and children or who were escaping prosecution for debt or crime, while there were others, not criminal, indeed, but shiftless, who not having the industry to acquire lands in Pennsylvania or New Jersey had been drawn to North Carolina by the lure of free lands and the hope of making a living without work; nor was this the worst: justice was badly administered and crime often went unpunished; for many years a notorious band of horse thieves had been preying upon the people; owing to these things North Carolina had a bad name.[110]

There was still another and very important class of the population which was already relatively numerous in Edgecombe and Northampton at this time. This was composed of the large slaveholders. Some of them were able to acquire wealth. All lived at leisure. They enjoyed one continuous round of social pleasure. Rev. Hugh McAden, seemingly referring to those of this class, speaks of their wealth and of their cheerfulness, and of their freedom from personal religious concern. But doubtless the owners of these great estates felt the obligation to maintain in their households and among their slaves a proper respect for moral and religious standards.

It was among these people, most of them with a religious heritage, morally upright in their lives and not without religious aspirations for themselves and their families, but beset by certain dangerous social and economic influences, that the General Baptist preachers made a determined fight for the Kingdom of Heaven and won the victory. These preachers, according to the testimony of all who have written of them, were men of exemplary lives, of deep piety and unfaltering devotion to their great cause. In winter and in summer they traveled long distances to carry the gospel to those who otherwise would never have heard the voice of a messenger of Zion. In the districts where the more cultured lived they often heard the reproach of their ignorance, and were sometimes scornfully driven from the seat of justice where they had claimed the right to be protected in holding their services; they were sometimes rudely interrupted by the constable as they were worshiping God and breaking the bread of life to a people hungry for the gospel. Yet they were undeterred and they went everywhere preaching the word. And under their preaching many among a people otherwise destitute of the gospel professed the hope of salvation and were baptized. No one today who loves the Lord can fail to thank God for their labors.

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[110] Bishop Spangenburg, *Colonial Records,* IV, 1313f.

Under the plan of work followed by these General Baptist preachers abuses soon began to arise. Such a plan was perhaps necessary since with the small number of ministers they could maintain only a few churches which were often at great distances from many of the inhabitants. When the evangelist had come and preached he immediately baptized as many as gladly received the word. He asked no other evidence of repentance than a desire to be baptized. In the mind of some, both laymen and preachers, baptism came to be regarded, if not the means of salvation, yet certainly the perfect seal of it. The practice of the General Baptists in regard to this ordinance as told by Burkitt and Read, possibly with slight exaggeration, is as follows:

> Several of these churches that at first belonged to the Kehukee Association, were gathered by the Freewill Baptists, and their custom was to baptize any persons who were willing, whether they had experience of grace or not, so in consequence of this practice, they had many members and several ministers in those churches, who were baptized before they were converted; and after they were brought to a knowledge of the truth, and joined the Regulars, openly confessed that they were baptized before they believed: and some of them said they did it in hope of getting to Heaven by it. Some of their ministers confessed that they endeavored to preach and administer the ordinance of baptism before they were converted themselves, and so zealous were they for baptism, (as some of them expected salvation by it) that one of their preachers confessed, if he could get any willing to be baptized, and it was in the night, that he would baptize them by the fire light, for fear they should get out of the notion before the next morning.

Many of those thus baptized believed that their salvation was certain, but yet they continued in sin. Such members were allowed to remain in some of the churches, and thus became a great reproach to the cause. But it is not necessary to suppose that all who fell away were unbelievers. There was at this time a great lack of religious instruction. Preachers were few; there were no teachers other than the preachers; there were few Bibles, no other religious literature; for many of the inhabitants it was twenty-five miles to the nearest church. Accordingly every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Although Morgan Edwards speaks as a partisan in discussing the General Baptists, he was probably correct when he said that of all Baptists in America those of North Carolina were the least spiritually minded. A reformation was needed; we shall see below how it took place.

## IX

## TRANSFORMATION TO PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

In the decade from 1750 to 1760 occurred two religious movements in North Carolina that greatly affected the progress of the Baptists. They were the transformation of the General Baptists to Particular Baptists and the rise of the Separate Baptists.

So far as regards the General Baptists their transformation to the Particular order was rather a revolution. A score of churches with their preachers after a period of unprecedented progress made a radical change in their views and from being Arminians became Calvinists of the most rigid type. So comprehensive and complete was this change that only two or three feeble organizations of the General Baptists were left in the Province.

Already in 1750 there were some signs of defection to the Particular Baptists. This defection began with the ministers. Rev. James Smart, who was baptized by Dr. Josiah Hart at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) and ordained on June 28, 1750, in about a half a year became a Particular Baptist and began to preach Calvinism to his congregation. Though the members of his church generally were sorely offended at his apostasy from their faith, yet it seems that his preaching was still tolerated for he remained in this section until 1755, when he left for South Carolina. As he was an acceptable and eloquent evangelist he probably did much to prepare other congregations than that at Fishing Creek for the transformation of a few years later. Another preacher ordained at the same time as Smart was Henry Ledbetter. In less than a year he, too, according to Edwards, "saw cause to alter his judgment and to declare himself a Particular Baptist. This gave great offense to his church which induced him to quit them and go to South Carolina." He was still in North Carolina in 1753, but the same year left for the south, stopping a short while at Black Creek, and then locating at Lynch's Creek. In 1752 another minister who afterwards was one of the most active in this section among the Baptists became a Calvinist. This was Rev. William Walker, who also was connected with Fishing Creek. In order to be more thoroughly instructed in the new doctrine he went to Charleston and spent a year in that Particular Baptist stronghold and then returned to his pastorate at Fishing Creek, which Ledbetter was leaving about this time.

It may be asked under what influence did these men come at this time that led them to adopt the Particular Baptist view. It was primarily the proselyting zeal of Rev. Robert Williams of Welsh Neck in South Carolina. This Robert Williams was a native of Northampton County. He had gone to the Pee Dee in 1745 and had there been trained in the Calvinistic doctrines of the Welsh Neck Baptists. Returning about 1750 on a visit to his native county he began to propagate his Calvinistic views. Being "a man of excellent natural parts, a minister who preached the gospel to the edification and comfort of souls, and a sincere Christian," he had great influence with the General Baptists especially those of the Kehukee church. Morgan Edwards says that Ledbetter was first taught Calvinism by Stephen Hollingsworth, a Particular Baptist preacher who was laboring in Bladen County, but it is not improbable that all the Fishing Creek ministers also came under the influence of Williams, and were confirmed by him in their change of views. At Kehukee, in 1751, among those converted to Calvinism by Williams was William Wallis. He bore the name of sley-maker, an artisan who in the day of hand looms was an indispensable member of society. Wallis after being instructed by Williams and possibly supplied with tracts by him became most active and importunate in speaking his views, conversing with any who would lend ear. According to Edwards he "made some impression" towards preparing the Kehukee church for the change. One of those who came under his influence was Rev. John Moore, who was further influenced by reading Fisher's *Marrow of Divinity* and Bunyan's *Law and Grace.* At the same time Rev. Edward Brown, who was at Great Cohara and nearer the Welsh Neck district, began to preach Calvinism, and seemingly visited Kehukee, and adding to what had already been done by Williams and Wallis won over the pastor, Rev. Thomas Pope. Rev. Charles Daniel possibly came under the same influences, but he did not publicly change his sentiments until 1755, and then as a result of reading Whitefield's sermons.

But Williams seems not to have been content to let the matter rest here. He rightly supposed that abler and more learned teachers than himself were needed if these North Carolina churches were to be won to the Particular Baptist view. Accordingly, since Welsh Neck, as is well known, was in easy communication with the Philadelphia Association, he brought to the attention of the Philadelphia Association the condition of the Baptist churches in North Carolina. This at least is the most probable explanation of the way in which the Philadelphia Association came to have an interest in the North Carolina Baptists, and the words of Morgan Edwards confirm this supposition, although other requests for messengers to come south were at that time reaching the Philadelphia Association.

The first to be sent was Rev. John Gano, who came on his first trip to the Carolinas in 1754.[1] Gano was, according to Benedict,[2] one of the most eminent ministers of his day, and as an itinerant inferior to none who ever traveled in America with the possible exception of Whitefield. He was born at Hopewell, New Jersey, in 1727; was ordained as a traveling minister by the Philadelphia Association in May, 1754, and after attending the session of the Association in October of that year,[3] set out on his journey to the Southern colonies. On his way South he passed through North Carolina and went direct to Charleston and attended the meeting of the Association in that city. In South Carolina he preached with much acceptance, his first sermon being delivered before a brilliant audience in which were a dozen ministers, among them the celebrated Whitefield. On his return he came by way of Tar River, attended a muster and preached, and in the month of May, 1755, visited Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek). It was probably here that he had that interview with the ministers of the General Baptist churches as told by Morgan Edwards,[4] whose account is as follows:

> On his arrival, he sent to the ministers, requesting an interview with them, which they declined, and appointed a meeting among themselves, to consult what to do. Mr. Gano, hearing of it, went to their meeting, and addressed them in words to this effect: "I have desired a visit from you, which, as a brother and a stranger, I had a right to expect; but as ye have refused, I give up my claim and am come to pay you a visit." With this he ascended into the pulpit, and read for his text the following words, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" This text he managed in such a manner as to make some afraid of him, and others ashamed of their shyness.

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[1] Morgan Edwards, often unreliable as to dates, says that Gano made this visit in 1753; but Benedict in 1754. The *History of the Philadelphia Association* and that of the Charleston Association agree on the date of 1754.

[2] *History of Baptists*, 306. [3] *Philadelphia Association*, 71.

[4] Told also in Benedict, *History of Baptists*, II, 99. Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association*, 230, writing of Reedy Creek church, say: "Things went on thus until 1755. In May, that year, Elder John Gano, from the North, visited this place, and seeing the situation, probably represented the case, on his return to the Philadelphia Association."

> Many were convinced of their errors, touching faith and conversation, and submitted to an examination. One minister (who stood well with himself), hearing this, went to be examined, and intimated to his people, he should return triumphant. Mr. Gano heard him out, and then turned to his companion and said, "I profess, brother, this will not do: this man has yet the needful to seek." Upon which the person examined hastened home, and upon being asked how he came off, replied, "The Lord have mercy upon you, for this northern minister put a *mene tekel* upon me."

One of the wonders of our church history is that these ministers should have heard any one whose theology differed from their own; they must have been very reasonable men, who knew and deplored the evils which Gano showed to be inherent in their views on repentance and faith, and who were ready for any suggestions which would lead to churches with members committed to leading pure and holy lives. But Mr. Gano's success was partly due, without doubt, to his ready comprehension of the situation, and the tact and sympathy and grace with which he urged the reform.

When I come to discuss the Baptists in the Jersey Settlement, I will give some further account of Mr. Gano's labors.

On his return to Philadelphia he represented to the Association the unhappy condition of the North Carolina Baptists.[5] On hearing the story told with many interesting details by their young messenger the ministers and delegates of this the oldest Baptist Association in America were moved with compassion for the Baptists of North Carolina and they voted "that one ministering brother from the Jerseys, and one from Pennsylvania, visit North Carolina, the several churches to contribute to their expenses." It is well to mark the warm missionary zeal of these Philadelphia Baptists and their readiness to make contributions of money to send messengers to rescue their Carolina brethren from error. But for it we should have a very different type of

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[5] *Philadelphia Association*, 72.

Baptists in Eastern North Carolina from that found there today.

Having decided to send the brethren to our State the Association sought out two of the very ablest among themselves for the important mission, Peter Peterson Vanhorn and Benjamin Miller. Vanhorn was pastor of one of the oldest and most important churches in the Association, that of Pennepek. In 1756 he was appointed one of the trustees of the proposed new Latin Grammar School, which that Association was so early seeking to establish to promote useful learning and to whose support the contributions of the churches were asked, and in which there was before two years a number of well inclined youth applying themselves to learning. In 1761 he was appointed along with Morgan Edwards to keep the records of the Association and to revive and keep up a correspondence with the brethren in London. In the same year he wrote the Pastoral Address and served as Secretary of the Association. Thus it will be seen that Vanhorn was one of their ablest and most trusted ministers.

Miller was also a man whose fitness for the great mission on which he was to go was already manifest. A wild youth he had been converted a few years before and had devoted himself to the ministry. Becoming pastor of the church at Scotch Plains, New Jersey, in 1747, in three years he had seen its membership increase from fourteen to seventy-five, and in ten years the church both in membership and congregation was the largest in the Association. In 1761 he was the Association's moderator, while the minutes show that he was often entrusted with delicate missions. Late in 1754 or early in 1755 he followed a colony from New Jersey to the Yadkin in North Carolina and organized there the first Baptist church west of Granville County. Here he remained for some months and not only established the church among the Jersey settlers but won over many of the other settlers, among them many who had been Presbyterians, to the Baptist faith.[6]

Mr. Miller does not seem to have been in the settlement at the time of McAden's first visit in September, 1755; but McAden found him there on Sunday, January 11, 1756, on his return from his trip to Sugar Creek and the Catawba settlements, and in his journal spoke favorably of him as a Christian.[7]

Such were the able men whom the Philadelphia Association elected to send at their own expense to North Carolina. "Sent forth by the Holy Ghost" (shall we say?), they left Philadelphia on Tuesday, October 28, 1755. On their way south they were instructed if convenient to assist in the ordination of Mr. Jaret in Virginia. They were soon in North Carolina at the work of their mission. The first church which they visited was that at Kehukee. Here they had a right to expect a ready acceptance of their views, since the membership of this church had already been proselyted by Rev. Robert Williams and by William Wallis, while its former pastor, Edward Brown, and its present pastor, Thomas Pope, were both already Calvinists, and hence ready to welcome the missionaries of that faith and to coöperate with them in reconstituting their church after the Particular Baptist order. And yet, on the reorganization of this strong Kehukee church, which took place on December 11, 1755, the new membership numbered only ten, including the pastor and a John Moore, probably the pastor of the church at Tar River Falls.

This church at Kehukee, according to Morgan Edwards, who, however, is not careful about his dates, was the first in this region to embrace the "doctrine of grace." Its example was soon followed by most of the other General Baptist churches of North Carolina, the date of reorganization, constituting ministers, and number of members in the new organizations being as follows: Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), December 6, 1755, Miller and Vanhorn, 13 members; Bear Creek in Lenoir County, early in 1756, Miller and Vanhorn, 15 members; Swift Creek, Craven County, February 27, 1756, Miller and Vanhorn, 12 members; Lower Fishing Creek, October 13, 1756, Rev. Thomas Pope, 6 members; Pasquotank (Shiloh), January 20, 1758, Thomas Pope and Charles Daniel, 12 members; Falls of Tar, December 3, 1757, John Moore and Charles Daniel, 7 members; Toisnot, September 7, 1758, John Moore and George Graham, 14 members; Red Banks, November 20, 1758, Thomas Pope and Joseph Willis, many members proselyted by Elder Jeremy Rhame; Great Cohara, October 15, 1759, Thomas Pope, Jonathan Thomas and Stephen Hollingsworth, 12 members; Tar River, April 3, 1761, William Walker, 20 members. In the meantime, Rev. Thomas Pope had crossed the Roanoke and organized a small church from the disorganized and pastorless members of the Bertie, or Sandy Run, church. There was no reorganization at this time at Meherrin, Pungo, and Grassy Creek, the last of which became a Separate Baptist church in 1756.[8]

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[6] Foote, *Sketches*, p. 167.

[7] Foote, *Sketches*, p. 171. In some way Miller had found time to visit his Jersey brethren on his missionary trip south with Vanhorn.

The reader's attention is called to the small number of members with which these Particular Baptist churches were reconstituted on the ruins of the former large memberships of the General Baptist churches. An instance of this is that of Pasquotank (Shiloh) where, according to Morgan Edwards' statement, of a membership which was two hundred or more only twelve were found in the new organization. Another instance is that of Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) where, according to Burkitt and Read, "of the great numbers baptized" by the several General Baptist preachers who had labored there, "only about ten" were received. At lower Fishing Creek, where Joseph Parker had labored eight years, and which was one of the oldest and most populous settlements in the county, there were only five members in the new constitution. Similarly at the Falls of the Tar, where there must have been a large General Baptist church, since it was also an early and populous settlement and the Baptist preachers had for ten years been laboring there, only five beside the pastor and his wife were in the new constitution.

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[8] Morgan Edwards gives the date of the reorganization of the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) Church as December 6, 1755, which is inconsistent with his statement that Kehukee was the first church to be reorganized. He also gives the date at which Miller and Vanhorn reorganized the Bear Creek Church as 1757. There is no doubt that this should be 1756 as they had returned to Philadelphia early in 1756, and in all probability visited this church shortly before or after their visit to the Swift Creek Church in February, 1756.

As indicated in the above statement, hardly more than five per cent of the General Baptist members were in the newly constituted Particular Baptist churches. That such a small proportion should have taken possession of the church name and property requires explanation. It was easier to effect since the ministers were first won over, and it was only in those churches whose ministers had been so won that the transformation was made. The lay members, as the figures indicate, were much more conservative than the preachers, and even the small numbers necessary to form the new organization were induced to follow their ministers only after much solicitation and labor. Thus after his own conversion Rev. John Moore at the Falls of the Tar "proselyted some of the church," and finally induced five to join in his views; in the same way Elder Charles Daniel who had for some time been a Calvinist became the pastor of the five "chief of the members" at Lower Fishing Creek on their reorganization; and even in those churches which had the assistance of Miller and Vanhorn the results were meagre.

And not only were the lay members not ready to accept the faith of the reformers, but they in some instances at least showed open hostility to those who were taking away the old organizations and putting in their places those they did not approve. For many years, say the authors of the *History of Edgecombe County*,[9] the two factions of the Baptists waged the doctrinal controversy with much bitterness and, like the Jews and Samaritans, had no dealings with one another. Though their account is confused yet it is doubtless based on a genuine tradition, and it has some confirmation in the court records. The two factions in the Toisnot church each claimed the meeting house, and John Thomas, the pastor recently installed as Particular Baptist minister, "forcefully closed the church to the services of the Baptist Society," that is, the General Baptists. The latter brought the matter into the Inferior Court in 1759, but it seems never to have been brought to trial. If so, it was decided in favor of the Particular Baptists, for Morgan Edwards represents them as still being in possession of the meeting house in 1772.[10]

Sufficient evidence of how intense and lasting was this animosity is to be seen in the short shrift given the General Baptists in the pages of Morgan Edwards who wrote fifteen years after, and of Burkitt and Read who wrote nearly a half century later. We might have expected to find more appeals to the courts to settle the claims to the meeting houses, for it is strange that the General Baptists should have so meekly acquiesced in the loss of their property to the few seceders from their doctrine. It is to be explained partly on the supposition that the ministers were all-influential in the churches and in a sense the title to the church was regarded as being vested in its minister. The conservatives, though much the more numerous, had no leader, no religious teacher, no preacher, and if the meeting house, church and all, had been given them they would have been able to make no use of it.

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[9] Turner and Bridgers, *History of Edgecombe County,* p. 389.

[10] See Morgan Edwards' account of the Toisnot church. The account of the court action as given by Turner and Bridgers is as follows: "The Inferior Court made provisions for religious worship. The first reference concerning religious matters was made in the form of a petition in 1759 by John Thomas and others of the profession of Ana-Baptist. It seems that a Society of Baptists had constructed a meeting house, and a division in the society had occasioned a dispute over the legal owners; consequently, John Thomas, a leader of the Ana-Baptist element, petitioned for a claim to the meeting house which had been constructed under his supervision. The church had been built on Mr. S. Thomas's land, near Jonathan Thomas's, according to a grant issued by the Parliament of Great Britain. [The authors seem to have been misled here. Probably it was recited in Mr. Thomas's complaint that the church had been constructed in accord with Act of Parliament, by which no special Act for the benefit of this church was intended, but only the general Toleration Act. G. W. P.] Mr. Thomas was one of the active leaders of the dissenting element, and had forcefully closed the doors of the church to the services of the Baptist Society. There is no record of the court's disposition of the matter, and so far as known it was never decided or its legal owners identified." *History of Edgecombe County,* p. 52.

The method of reorganization was first for the church in conference to disband whatever organization had previously existed, which in most cases, if we may believe Burkitt and Read, had been very loose. It was the preacher's church, though he had his deacons also in some instances. At the transformation those who desired to come into the new order were required to come under a new examination, which was conducted by the approved ministers of the Particular Baptist faith who were present for that purpose. This examination was intended to determine whether the applicant had been converted before his baptism, and he was expected to satisfy the examiners by a relation of the religious experience which had led him to seek baptism. With Miller and Vanhorn these examinations seem to have been conducted with much rigidity. A recollection of it is seen in Burkitt and Read's account of the reorganization of the Reedy Creek church. They say that when these ministers attended there to "settle the church" upon the doctrines of Free Grace and according to the gospel order, they received, "all the baptized persons that in a judgment of charity were born again," yet found only thirteen. And so careful were they to guard against any possible lapse to Arminianism, that on their departure they refused to install William Walker, who was a professed Calvinist, in the pastorate, but kept him on probation for a year, and in the meantime left the church under the charge of Elder Thomas Pope of Kehukee.[11] When Miller and Vanhorn had left the Province their mantle fell on Rev. Thomas Pope of the Kehukee church, who continued the same rigid exclusiveness in the numerous churches he helped to reorganize. But as we shall find when we come to our account of the Kehukee Association, it was not many years before great numbers with General Baptist views were again in the churches and men like Lemuel Burkitt were complaining that in their membership were many unregenerate persons.

No account of this transformation from General Baptist to Particular Baptist would be complete unless it indicated what it involved. In the first place, according to the claims of the Particular Baptists, it meant that instead of a converted and baptized membership the churches should be composed of a regenerate and baptized membership, the emphasis being on regeneration rather than on baptism. Again it meant instead of a loosely organized church, exercising no more discipline over its members than the Church of England at that time, there should be a closely organized body which took strict account of the conduct and life of its members and which celebrated the communion of the Lord's Supper regularly.[12]

One other important aspect of this change from General to Particular Baptist remains to be spoken of. It involved the acceptance of a Church Covenant, the first part of which was a statement of a system of Calvinistic theology in its most rigid form, and the second part a covenant proper in which the strictest discipline was prescribed. It appears to have been written by Miller and Vanhorn and to have been used in the constitution of all the early Particular Baptist churches in North Carolina. A copy of it, which the reader will find printed in full below, was preserved in the record book of Sandy Creek Church in Franklin County, which William Walker used at its organization of January 29, 1771, and from that it was copied[13] for the church at Poplar Spring by the Church Clerk, Isaac Pippin. It is a lengthy theological document. In the first part are set forth in rather crude fashion the doctrines of total depravity; of the Trinity with especial caution against the gnostic unitarian views; the atonement in its baldest form; conviction of sin, predestination; free grace and election, justification, without any merit on our part, by the blood of Christ; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection, the final judgment, baptism, laying on of hands restricted to the ministerial function; final perseverance in grace; in short, all other Scriptural "principles and articles of doctrine and religious practice contained in the confession of faith adopted by the Baptist Association at Philadelphia, Anno Dom. 1742 and reprinted in 1743." All this abstract of confession of faith is followed by the covenant proper. It is small wonder that among the converts baptized by the General Baptist preachers were found great numbers who were bewildered by such a formidable array of theological dogmas and hesitated to commit themselves to the new order. Even the pious proselytes might well be repelled by the long-sustained statement of Calvinistic tenets, while they welcomed the brotherly but firm discipline contemplated in the covenant proper, which was really the strength of the reformation.

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[11] *History of the Kehukee Association*, p. 230.

[12] Hence, Morgan Edwards is careful to tell when and how often the various churches hold communion, and his description of church members is those "in communion."

It may be said here that this statement of dogmas comprehended in the covenant under which these churches were reorganized proved to be much more than an idle form. It really became the program for the instruction of the members of those churches and many others to be organized later. It was only the rare preacher, one who had the advantage of some education and was withal a man of ability, that dared depart from it. For the more unlearned it circumscribed the range of religious thought; but in the narrow range of its dogmas he was rigidly trained. He meditated on them day and night and sought in every sermon to teach them to his people. He had no other message, for in his lack of books and periodicals he supposed that in them was contained the principles of all religious knowledge worth while. The result was that in a half a century many of the churches, especially those in the more unenlightened quarters, in eastern North Carolina were suffering from a blight of hyper-Calvinism. Both preachers and people were convinced that they had not only the truth but the whole truth. In these basic dogmas they were well instructed and even the unlettered could argue in defense of them with the subtlety of a learned logician. When three-quarters of a century later Rev. Samuel Wait attended a meeting of the Neuse Association he was impressed both by the meagreness of the religious thought of the people and their shrewdness in defending their Calvinistic tenets. But the blight was to continue, bringing some churches to extinction and withering others, for many a long year, and that too in a section where the Baptists had planted in virgin soil and had fair prospects of a most fruitful vineyard. By the blessings of God there were many Baptists like Henry Abbot, John Burges and Martin Ross; even Lemuel Burkitt proved nobler than his creed. Such men saved many churches, all in the section to the north of the Roanoke River and some churches elsewhere, to a healthier and more Christ-like culture. And soon all were coming to feel the influence of the evangelical zeal of the Separates of Sandy Creek under Shubal Stearns.[14]

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[13] Both these Church Books are in the Library of Wake Forest College.

The Calvinism was indeed of the most rigid kind, and probably it came to occupy a much larger place in the religious life of many churches than the Philadelphia ministers who introduced it contemplated. In the matter of church discipline, however, the reforms which they introduced were most wholesome. The Particular Baptist church differed much for the better from the General Baptist church on whose ruins it was built. It introduced into North Carolina the church discipline of Welsh Tract and Pennepek. The greatest care was exercised in the admission of members, the effort being to admit only the redeemed of the Lord in whom Christ was revealed as the hope of glory; those thus gathered covenanted to live holy lives; they would meet together every Lord's Day for worship and mutual edification; they would keep the day holy and take care that their families and all under their care should do the same; at all times they would behave themselves as becometh the redeemed of Jesus Christ, their head and king, their prophet and priest; according to their ability they would seek to honor God in ways that would be helpful both to themselves and others; they would walk in all humility and not assume any ministerial function or dignity without the call of the church; they would jointly maintain the worship of God; they would regulate their lives and practices by the word of God; they would admonish, encourage and reprove one another and in turn meekly receive reproof from their brethren; they would keep the appointed meetings; they would keep their secrets, for the church of Christ is a garden enclosed; they would not separate themselves from the church without regular dismission; they would attend as God gave them means, grace and opportunity on the institution of the ordinances; always relying upon Almighty God for grace, wisdom, spiritual understanding, guidance and ability to adorn their profession and perform their duties.

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[14] The influence of the Separates will be told of below.

Such church discipline was something new in North Carolina. In some churches indeed, such as that which met in the house of William Burges, there had been among the General Baptists many men whose holy lives must have profoundly influenced the community in which they lived. In some such as that at Meherrin amid the privations and dangers of the frontier the members doubtless came together for worship every week in the sweetest bonds of Christian unity and love; but these churches exercised a weaker influence on the morals of the people because they had in their membership many who were unconverted and whose lives were grossly immoral. The new churches were different; in their membership were only the elect; they were walking in a way in which only the redeemed of the Lord walked; they were a body of brethren pledged to mutual helpfulness, to helpfulness to all men, to the worship of God on the Lord's Day; to religious responsibility for their children and dependents; to live such lives as would honor God. The unrighteous and the unclean were without. According to their covenant they also pledged themselves to keep secret their church affairs. Probably this provision had come down from the Welsh churches in which secrecy was prompted by considerations of safety. It was not a mere empty phrase in the covenant of the Particular Baptist churches of North Carolina. It gave them a character of greater separateness and sanctity in the eyes of their members, who came to regard their churches very much as the members of some secret orders of today regard these orders. It strengthened in them the sense of unity. Another result was that in many churches the members were reserved in speaking of the affairs of church to outsiders, thus investing themselves and the church with an air of mysticism. Even to this day in many a church reticence in regard to its affairs reigns among its members, who clearly show that they think curiosity in others about their church business an impertinence.

In summing up the whole matter, it is not too much to say that with the reformation from General to Particular Baptist churches came a new standard of church membership in North Carolina. From this time the churches set new standards of morality and righteousness which most profoundly and beneficially modified the lives of the people who came under the influence of their ministrations.

Since it is today only to be found in old church books, I give here this Church Covenant entire:

> For as much as God has been graciously pleased to make known unto us by his revealed will, his word of truth, the great privileges of the blessed Gospel of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and hath made us experience his love and favour in that he hath called us from our state of nature in which state we were enemies to God by wicked works, and has revealed Christ in us the hope of glory, therefore, for the better carrying on to our mutual comfort and the advancement of the great privileges of the true religion of the glory of God and praise of his glorious Gospel grace, we whose names are hereunto subscribed, inhabitants of Franklin, Wake and Nash Counties and State of North Carolina, being all of us baptized on a profession of faith and belief of our ever living and only true God, and of a Trinity of Persons in unity of Essence, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, subsisting in the unity of the Godhead, the eternally begotten Son of God, and (one) with the Father in Essence, and equal in Person, in the fulness of time, did take human nature into that inseparable union with his Divine person, and in the same did fulfill the Law, died on the cross, thereby making atonement for sin, satisfied divine justice and purchased peace for sinners, that all mankind fell from the estate of created innocency in, with and by Adam's first sin, and became liable to the wrath of God's holy law, convinced of their estate and condition, consequently have no hope of eternal life, until by the same law convinced of this, and the damning nature of all sin in us from the root, and so made to fly for eternal life by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who alone is the mediator of the

New Covenant, and the redeemer of God's elect without any merit in us, or moving cause of Good in us foreseen to merit his mercy, was delivered to death for our offences, and that we might be truly justified by his free and sovereign grace was raised again for our justification, and in whom only we have redemption through his precious blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, we believe that he ascended into heaven and there sitteth at the right hand of God the Father; from thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead at the last great day, and believing also the doctrine of the Scriptures in all orthodox points, the doctrine of baptism, laying on of hands peculiar to the ministerial function, final perseverance in grace, the resurrection of the dead bodies of men and the eternal judgment, together with all those principles and articles of doctrine and practice contained in the confession of faith adopted by the Baptist Association at Philadelphia anno Dom 1742 and reprinted in 1743, having unanimously appointed the 7th day of September 1793 to join together in a Gospel Church relation and fellowship at Poplar Springs Meeting-House, under the pastoral care of the Reverend William Lancaster, and having spent part of the day in prayer we gave ourselves to the Lord, and unto one another by the will of God according to 2 Corinthians, 8th Chapter and 15th verse; as a church of Christ we do solemly and voluntarily and mutually covenant with one another to meet together every Lord's day, as many as can conveniently, to celebrate the worship of the Almighty God, to edify one another in his service, in the best manner we can, and do promise to each other to keep the day holy and watch over each of our families and children under our care, that they may do the same; at all (times) behaving ourselves as becometh the Gospel of our dear Redeemer Jesus Christ whom we now take for our head and king, our prophet and our priest, and according to our ability to promote the glory of God, our own benefit and the good of others so as not to break the order of the Gospel Church by taking upon ourselves any office or dignity of the same of the ministry or other until thereunto called by the voice of the church according to God's ordinances—he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted—and that no man taketh the office unto himself unless he is thereunto called; and jointly to maintain the worship of God and to edify one another in love, and as God shall enable us by his grace to maintain the doctrine of the blessed Gospel and to regulate our practices by the word of God, and to watch over one another therein in the Lord, Philippians 2 chapter and 4th verse, and admonish, encourage, and reprove each other if need be according to Gospel rules in love, and to be admonished and reproved by each other as the word of God directs, as far as

God shall enable us; to perform all mutual duties towards each other and to those that shall hereafter join with us, and to keep our appointed meetings and to keep our secrets, being taught of God's word that the church of Christ is a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; and not to depart from one another illegally or without regular dismission; and that we shall, as God gives us means, ability, conveniency and opportunity, attend on the means of grace, the institution of the ordinances of the Gospel, hoping and relying upon Almighty God for grace, wisdom and spiritual understanding, guidance and ability to adorn this our profession and to perform our duties, hoping that he will bless us with grace suitable to our privileges; which he in his goodness and mercy hath bestowed upon us in his house through Jesus Christ our Lord to whom be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.

To the Church of Christ at Poplar Springs Meeting-House.

A true copy, this 28th November, 1793. Isaac Pippin, C.C.

While nearly all the General Baptist ministers soon joined in the reformation three remained in the old faith until the end. These were Elders Joseph Parker, William Parker, and John Winfield. All three had labored in the church at Meherrin, Joseph Parker being its first pastor and William Parker his assistant and later his successor, while Winfield was to become pastor of the church at Pungo in Beaufort County.

The case of Elder Joseph Parker is not without a touch of the pathetic. He and his wife Sarah had been members of the first Baptist church organized in North Carolina. His church at Meherrin was at this time the second oldest in the Province, and that offshoot of it, Sandy Run, was the third oldest. But while through his influence the church at Meherrin remained true to its pristine faith, he saw all the other churches which he had a part in organizing and all the preachers save those mentioned whom he had baptized fall away and become disciples and preachers of a new order. He was left alone. In these circumstances he sought new fields; first at Little Contentnea where he was preaching and baptizing as early as 1761, and where Morgan

Edwards found him pastor of a church; later he went to Wheat Swamp, where in deep poverty and dependent for support on the contributions of feeble congregations he and his aged wife took up their abode, organized a new church, and as its pastor continued to preach and baptize until his death. From the churches thus organized in his old age have come with slightly amended teachings the present Freewill Baptists of the State, who are said to number about thirty thousand. Baptists of the State of every shade of opinion continue to revere his memory and think of him with love, for he was a true and faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

The Calvinists soon built a church near that of Winfield on the Pungo and seem to have absorbed its membership. The church at Meherrin continued in the General Baptist order with diminishing power until the death of William Parker in 1794. Then it became a Particular Baptist church and the General Baptists of North Carolina were no more, unless indeed we regard the Freewill Baptists as General Baptists under a different name.

## X

## MORGAN EDWARDS'S NOTEBOOK ON NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Many of the facts of the foregoing account of the General Baptists have been taken from the two works of Morgan Edwards on North Carolina Baptist history. Morgan Edwards was a native of Wales and came to Philadelphia in 1761 to be the pastor of the Baptist church of that place. Here he labored for ten years. In 1770 he began to gather materials for a history of the Baptists of America, in pursuit of his purpose traveling through the provinces from New Hampshire to Georgia. In 1772 he spent several months in North Carolina visiting churches and associations. Such information as he could gather he assembled in notebooks, one for each province visited. These notebooks are now to be found in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society, at Chester, Pennsylvania. Later Mr. Edwards expanded each notebook into what he called a volume which included some matter not found in the original. These were left in manuscript but were freely used by Benedict in his *History of the Baptists.* That for North Carolina, entitled *Materials towards the History of the Baptists of North Carolina,* has been published with annotations in the *North Carolina Historical Review* for July, 1930. The notebooks have never before been published. A manuscript copy of that for North Carolina was made about a half century ago by Mr. J. C. Birdsong for the North Carolina State Library. A copy of this, collated with the original at Chester, is the basis of the publication that follows. I introduce it here since it contains matter relative to both the preceding account of the General and Particular Baptists and that of the Separate Baptists which follows.

## TOUR OF
## MORGAN EDWARDS
## of Pennsylvania
## To the American Baptists in North Carolina in 1772-73.

Page 1

### (REGULAR) HITCHCOCK,[1] (1772)

In the county of Anson, 200 EbN from Newburn and —— miles from Phila. No meeting house. Const. March 28, 1772, at the house of William Morris. Families 28, Memb. 14, Minister

### REV. HENRY EASTERLING

Born May 24, 1733, at the mouth of Nuse river. Bred a churchman. Embraced the principles of the Baptists in 1760 in Dobbs County by Rev. George Graham. Called to the ministry in 1762. Ordained March 29, 1772, when he took care of the church. He married Eliz. Bennett by whom he had children Sherdock, Henry, Bennett, John, James, Elizabeth, William, Mary, Martha, Joel. Came here

Page 2

in 1764, and preached in 1770. Baptized the following pursons: Jonathan Lewelin, Wm. Moody, Thomas Summerlin, Wm. Leggate, Wm. Smith, Nathaniel Williams, Mary Smith, Fanny Williams. Constituted March 28, 1772 by Mess. Edwards and Brown.

Page 3

### LITTLE RIVER[2] (SEPARATE)

{John Boneling at
Little River}

It makes into Pedee in the parish of Anson County —— miles from Newburn——miles SW from Philadelphia. The house is

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[1] Hitchcock's Creek is a small stream in the present county of Richmond, emptying into Falling Creek near Rockingham.

[2] This church was near the mouth of Little River in the part of Anson that was erected into Montgomery County. It was later known as the Fork of Little River.

30 feet by 20, built in 1758, on land given by Thomas Ward. This
church consists of four branches; one near; one house on
25 27 17
Rocky river (Edmund Lilly), Jones's Creek; another on Mountain
Creek, in each of which places is a house. No estate. Salary 60£. Ruling elders, laying on of hands admitted here. Divided about love-feasts, washing feet, etc. Families about 60 whereof 48 persons are baptized and in comm. which here is administered the 2nd Lord's day in ——— No ordained minister, but two preachers, John Bollin

Page 4

and Edmund Lilly. They began (*about 1759 when Mr. Murphy came to the house of John Jefferies on little river and afterwards baptized one Mary Nicholas, John Bowlin & wife, Edmond Nicholas & wife, John Lucas, Wm. Lucas*)[3] 1760, when the following pursons were formed into a church before they removed hither from Deep River, viz: Richard Curtis, Josephs Murphy and wife, John Lee and wife, William Searsy and wife and Susan Carr. The most remarkable things that may be said of this church are (1) That in three year it increased from 8 souls to 500 but is now reduced low by removal of families to other parts, chiefly occasioned by oppressions which seems to them remediless since the battle of Almance. The first minister was

## REV. JOSEPH MURPHY

He was born April 1, 1734, in Spotsylvania. Bred a churchman. (Embraced the principles of the Baptists in 1757 and had the) ordinance administered to him by

Page 5

Shubal Stearns. Ordained in 1760 at which time he had the care of his little emigrating church; but resigned in 1768 to go to the *Atkin*. His success is no less surprising than his conversion. He was once wicked to a proverb, but now an eminent christian and a useful preacher.

The vile Col. F——n accused him of aiding and abettin the regulation whereof he was as clear as any man whatsoever; yet a party of horse was sent to seize him, but could not find him. He married a Haley, by whom he has children: Sarah, Ferreby, Eleanor, Susanna, Elizabeth.

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[3] In the original notebook Mr. Edwards has run a cancellation line through the words here printed in italics, his reason evidently being that they do not concern the establishment of Little River as an independent church. The canceled words show that Murphy had preached and baptized in this place before he brought the organized church from Deep River. The congregation already had a meeting house built in 1758, and in that year were represented at the Sandy Creek Association by its minister, Joseph Breed.

### Page 6

## SANDY CREEK, (SEPARATE)

So called from a creek running into deep river, a branch of Cape fear, in the county of Guilford, 250 miles NW from Newburn, and —— miles from Philadelphia. The house is 30 feet by 26, built in 1762 on the land of Seamore York. No estate. Laying on of hands and ruling elders admitted. No salary except helps in labour and presents, to the amount of 20 l. The families about 40, whereof 15 pursons are baptized and in communion, which was here administered every other Sunday, except when they could not get wine. No ordained ministers but exhorters, Met Tiden Lane and James Billingsley, They began in this manner. The fall after

### Page 7

Braddock's defeat (November 22, 1755) the following pursons came from Opekon, in Virginia and settled in the neighbourhood of *Sandy Creek,* viz.: Rev. Shubal Stearns and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Shubal Stearns Senr. and his wife, Ebenezer Stearns and wife, Enos Stinson and wife, Peter Stearns and wife, Jonathan Polk and wife: the same year they built a little meeting house near the present, where they administered the Lord's Supper. Soon after the neighbourhood was alarmed and the Spirit of God listed to blow as a mighty rushing wind in so much that in three years time they had increased to three churches, consisting upwards of 900 communicants, viz: Sandy Creek, Abot's Creek, Deep river. The most remarkable

### Page 8

events are these: (1) It is a mother church, nay a grand mother, and a great grand mother. All the separate baptists sprang hence: not only eastward towards the sea, but westward towards the great river Mississippi, but northward to Virginia and southward to South Carolina and Georgia. The word went forth from this sion, and great was the company of them who published it, in so much that her converts were as the drops of morning dew. The first church that sprang hence was Abboot's Creek, then Deep River, Little river, New River, (Ezek. Hunter) Southwest

(Charles Marklin), Trent (James McDaniel), Staunton-river, Virg. (William Murphy), Fall-creek, Va. (Samuel Harris), Dan-river, Va. (Dutton Lane), Grassy-creek (James Reed),

Page 9

John Waller's church, Va Amelia Va. (Jeremiah Walker), Fair-forest, S. C. (Phil Mulkey) Congaree, S. C. (Joseph Rees), Stephens-Creek, S. C. (Dan. Marshal), Shallow-fords, N. C., (Joseph Murphy), &c. The ministers, Daniel Marshall, Philip Mulkey, John Newton, Joseph Murphy, William Murphy, Dutton Lane, Ezekiel Hunter, Charles Marklin, James McDaniel, Joseph Rees, James Reed, Samuel Harris, John Waller, Jeremy Walker, —— Ireland, Elijah Creague (Craig), Elnathan Davis. (2) This church was reduced in——years to——souls, partly by detachments to form other churches; partly by departure of families to other province, partly by the regulation; the battle of Alamance was fought within 20 miles of it. The first minister

### REV. SHUBAL STEARNS[4]

He had mess. Joseph Breed and Daniel Marshall. Mr. Stearns was born January 28, 1706 in Boston. Bred a Presbyterian. Embraced the principles in the year 1751 at Tolland in Connecticut, and had the ordinance administered to him by Rev. Wait Palmer. Came first to Opekon, in Virginia and thence to Sandy Creek, November 14, 1755. Died November 20, 1771, and was buried at Sandy Creek. He married Sarah Johnstone, but left no issue. Was ordained March 20, 1751 at Tolland by Rev. mess. Wait Palmer and Joshua Moss, elders of Stonington and Newlondon.

## ASSOCIATION OF THE SEPARATISTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

It began in 1758, in June 2d Monday, at Sandy-creek, and therefore called the Sandy-creek association. The constituents were the church of Sandy-creek, of Abbot's-creek, and of Deep-river. In — years it increased to — churches. It is moveable, Held now the 2nd Saturday in October—held this year[5] at Haw River.

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[4] The correct spelling of Mr. Stearns's name seems to be that given by Edwards, "Shubal." Mr. Stearns himself so spelled it in signing four petitions in favor of men accused as Regulators, *Colonial Records*, IX, 27ff. The same spelling was used by Semple in his *History of the Virginia Baptists.* The spelling "Shubael," a Scripture name, was used by Backus in his *Abridgment*, p. 250, in the year 1804, and later by Benedict and other writers.

[5] 1771.

The churches in the Association are—

*Sandy creek*—Shubal Stearns.
*Newriver*—Ezekiel Hunter.
*Southwest*—Charles Markland.
*Haw river*—Elnathan Davis
*Little river*—John Bollin (not ordained)
*Grassy creek*—James Reed*
*Shallow Fords*—Joseph Murphy, Dan. Marshall.
Lockwood's *folly*—Mr. Guess (not ordained)
Trent—James McDonald.*[6]

### Page 12

This association held at Sandy Creek the 2d Saturday in October 1769, resolved "That if any took up arms against the civil authority he be excommunicated."

### Page 13

## SHALLOW FORDS—(SEPARATE)

So called from the fords of the Atkin river, in the county of Surry 30 miles NW from Newburn, and — miles from Philadelphia. Two branches, one near, the other at Mulberry fields, another in the forks of the Atkin, near the Moravian settlement. Began with a few from Little, the remains of the Jersey Settlement church. The minister Joseph Murphy, born in Spotsylvania Ap 5, 1734. Bred a churchman—baptized by Shubal Stearns at Deep river in 1757, ordained 1760. Children—Sarah, Ferribe, Eleanor, Susanna, Elizabeth. The mother's name is Haly.

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## HOLSTON STAUNTON,[7] VIRGINIA

A branch near, another near the the head of the Roannoak—one at Staunton river. Begun about 1762. The minister William Murphy. Baptized at Deep river by Shubal Stearns. Ordained at

5

Staunton in 1763. He married Sarah Barton: his first was one of the Hodges. He has children by both: John, Keziah, William, Joseph, Tabitha.

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[6] Mr. Edwards was not consistent in his spelling. James McDonald here appears above as James McDaniel, which is the correct form. Charles Markland, whose name appears here in correct spelling, is called Charles Marklin above. A star seems to indicate an evangelist, or itinerant preacher.

[7] By inadvertance Mr. Edwards introduces a Virginia church here. Another, Black Water, will be found below. Probably, however, both in 1772 were in the Sandy Creek Association.

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## HAW RIVER,—(SEPARATE)

The north branch of Cape Fear near to which the principal meeting house stands in Chatham County, 20 miles above the fork, 190 miles west from Newburn, and — SSW from Philadelphia. The church consists of six branches: one near *Haw River,* where is a house 32 feet by 24, built in 1769, on vacant land; another at *Collin's Mount,* north side of Haw River, *Deep River, Rocky-river, Tick-creek, Caraway Creek,* in Guilford County, at each of which is a meeting house. The minister Rev. Elnathan Davis, who has to his assistance Nathaniel Powell, (Deepriver) Drury
ditto
Sims (Rockriver)* George Williams, (Rocky River) James

* Thomas Brown, (Collin's Mount), John Robins, Caraway Creek.

Steward (Haw River). The families about 310 whereof 198 are baptised and in communion, which is here administered

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the last Sunday in Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct., In rotation at each branch. No estate. No settled salary, but helped to the amount of about 20 l a year. Ruling elders, imposition of hands, love feasts, kiss of charity, anointing the sick, washing feet, &c., are admitted. They had their beginning in this manner: When Mulkey's church at Deep River emigrated the following remained: Nathaniel Powell, Conrad Dowde and wife, Isaac Brooks and wife, Mary Brooks, Sharper and Cato (negroes) Mr. Hodge, James Steward, Simon Poe, Robert Calleh, Samuel Mash, (these four baptised by Stearns). These constituted into a church the last Saturday in October, 1764. joined Sandy Creek Association October 1765

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The first Minister is the present (Remark*)

### REV. ELNATHAN DAVIS

(Remarks) things (1) They resolved the last Saturday in November to excommunicate any that would join the Regulators.[8] Mash threatened much. —took many rifles. Robert Mash was threatened with 30 lashes a month till he consented to join the Regulators.

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[8] In the copy made by Mr. Birdsong the reading is, "they resolved to excommunicate any that would *not* join the Regulators. The original has the reading given in the text.

born November 9, 1735 at Baltimore county in Maryland, bred a 7th day Baptist; raised on James River in Virginia. Came to this part of the country in 1757. Baptised by Shubal Stearns May 1764. Called to the ministry at Haw river, the same year. Ordained November 13, 1770, by Rev. Mes. Samu. Harris & the elder James Steward. Married Mary Collins by whom he has children, Ruth, Benjamin, Elizabeth, James, Jonathan. His conversion—He went to see John Steward dipt, and so to hear Mr. Stearns. When he had stood a while he saw the people cry and tremble; then went off to pursons at a dis-

Page 18

tance. They asked "What think you of those damned people?" he made no reply, but went back—felt the people that were trembling—found it was real—praid that if it were of God he might have a feeling—if not of God that he might stand unattacted. The trembling seized him. Red Roman 8.1. which sealed his condemnation on Tuesday. Sunday following had deliverances.

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## TAR RIVER

In Granville county 165 miles NW from Newburn, and——miles from Philadelphia. It consists of two branches; one near

32

where is a meeting house 38 feet by 20, built in 1765 on land given by James Meadows; the other at Flat River, where a meeting is kept in a school house. No estate, no salary. no elders, no laying on of hands. The families about 56, whereof 42 pursons are baptised and in communion, which is here administered the 4th Lords day in Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct. They had their beginning as a church by Henry Ledbetter and wife, John Shearman and wife, Thomas Goss and wife, Richard Gibbs and wife, Edward Vesy and wife, James Langston, Solomon Langston, Jeremiah

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Lewis and wife, Benjamin Hubbard, William Forrest, Mary Shoemaker, Absolom Langston, Lucy Thompson. Elizabeth Spen. These were the 3rd day of April in 1761, constituted by Mr. Walker, of Fishing-creek, at whose church they had been a branch, joined the conference in 1764. The first minister was

### REV. WILLIAM WASHINGTON

a native of Virginia. Bred a churchman. Baptised by Richard Jones at Barley in Virginia about 1745; ordained about 1746, became minister of Tar River (*in 1738. Continued therein minister to 17 1756-1761. Resigned in favor of Mr. Abbott while it was Arminian*)[9] at the constitution in 1761, resigned the same year to Ledbetter. Married Tabitha Reeves, who bor him many children. Prosecuted in North Carolina for saying in Virginia churchmen were fools. Lost 40 l at En-

Page 21

field

REV. HENRY LEDBETTER

taught to be a Calvinist by Mr. Hollingsworth.

(See Leunches Creek)[10]

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## SHALLOW FORD[11]

So called from one of the small fords of the *Atkin* river, near to which the meeting house stands, in the county of Surry, 300 miles NW from Newburn and 560 miles SW from Philadelphia. The church consists of three branches, one near the ford where is a place of worship 30 feet by 26, built in 1769; another in the fork of the Atkin, another in the Mulberry fields. Ruling Elders. laying on of hands are here admitted, but stand divided about washing feet &c. No estate, no salary except presents, labour &c., to the amount of perhaps £20. The minister is

REV. JOSEPH MURPHY,

who has to his assistance Messrs. David Allen, John Cates,

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David Chapman. The families about 350, whereof 185 pursons are baptised and in communion, which is here celebrated the 4th Lords day in the month.—They began partly by emigrant baptists who came hither from other churches, partly by the remains of Mr. Gano's church in Jersey-settlement, and partly by the labour of Mr. Joseph Murphy, who baptised several. These to the number of 32 were, in 1769, constituted into a distinct church, and joined the Sandy Creek Association in ——. No remarkable event hath happened since, except the rapid increase of the society from 32 to 185, in three years time. The minister

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[9] The words in italics are canceled by Mr. Edwards and are altogether omitted in his fuller account, *Materials,* etc. This is a good illustration of Mr. Edward's purpose to obscure as much as possible the work of the General Baptists. Leaving out the canceled words the account contains little intimation that Tar River was ever a General Baptist church or that Henry Abbot was ever pastor here.

[10] Lynch's Creek, S. C.

[11] Probably this second account of the Shallow Ford church was written after Mr. Edwards had got more information than he had when he wrote his first account.

REV. JOSEPH MURPHY.

(See under Little River)

## BLACK-WATER

So called from a branch of Stanton river (which (lower down) is Roannoak) near to which the meeting house stands in the county of Pitsylvania 216 miles N. from W.

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## FISHING CREEK[12]

A branch of Tar-river, near to which the meeting house stands in the parish of St. John, and county of Bute, 150 NW from Newburn, and —— miles SSW from Philadelphia. The church consists of three branches, one near the said Creek, where is a house 52 feet by 28, erected in 1771 on a lot of 2 acres, the gift of Thomas Onebey, another at *Benefield's Creek,* 28 miles off, another at *Sandy Creek* 17 miles off, in each of which is a meeting house. *Benefield's-Creek* is soon to be constituted. No estate. The salary 40 l a year to the present minister, Rev. William Walker. He has his assistants, Zechariah Thomson, and William Cook; No laying on

Page 25

of hands; ruling elders admitted. No feast of charity &c. The families about 500, whereof 250 pursons are baptised and in communion, which is here administered in rotation the 3rd Sunday in the month. This the present state. The began Dece. 6, 1755, when the following pursons were constituted into a church by means of Rev. mess. Benjamin Miller and P. P. Vanhorn: Samuel Davis, Samuel Mangum, James Petty and wife Sarah Davis, Richard Acock and wife, Richard Rennett, Martha Acock. The most remarkable things: (1) This is a church by a kind of transformation from general to particular Baptists, this transformation happened at Quehuky by means of Robert Williams who

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[12] This church is called Reedy Creek by Burkitt and Read and is still called by this name. It is located eight miles south of Macon, Warren County.

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sowed the seeds of Calvinism, after him a private man, (whose name was William Wallis) conversed with them and made some impression; then Edward Brown preached it, then Thomas Pope; then William Walker; afterwards Gano clenched it in 1753, afterwards by said Miller and Vanhorn. (2) Mother of John McGlamery, Ledbetter and Smart, Thomson, Wm. Washington, Walker. The present minister

### REV. WILLIAM WALKER.

Born January 24, 1717, at Newkent county, Virginia. Bred a churchman, embraced the sentiments of the Baptists August 9, 1746, and had the ordinance administered by Wm. Surgenor at Quehooky. Ordained in 1748 by Josiah Hart

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and Deacon; embraced calvinism in the year 1752. Took care of the church about 1755. Married Jane Bays, by whom he has children: Peter, Sarah, William, Mary, Martha, James, John, Joel, Lydia, Mercy Hope. His predecessor was

### REV. THOMAS POPE. (put him under Quehuky)

Born in 1728 at Quehooky in (*Virginia.*)[13] Bred a churchman; embraced the principles of the general baptists in 1750, and had the ordinance administered by William Surgenor. Ordained by Mess. Surgenor and Hart, in 1754 Soon after he embraced the freegrace scheme and took the care of this church. Died 1763, and was buried at Quehuky. He married Alice Ford, by whom he had children named, Amos, Edy.

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### QUEHUKY ASSOCIATION[14]

Began the Monday after the first Sunday in August 3, 1769. Held the same time. It began with five churches, viz:

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[13] The word "Virginia" is canceled in the original. Kehukee was probably not settled so early as 1728. In his *Materials* Edwards says that Pope "was born near Blackwater in Virginia." See also the sketch of Pope below.

[14] With reference to this table of the Kehukee Association the reader will note: (1) James Camel is for Elder James Gamewell, who labored chiefly in the churches in Pasquotank and Currituck. (2) Bartee indicates the pronunciation of Bertie in Edwards's day. (3) In the original the names given in italics under Three Creeks are canceled. This church had several branches on the waters of Swift, Middle and Black creeks which rise in Wake and flow through Johnston. One of these churches, Swift Creek, constituted in 1757, is the oldest church in Wake County. (4) In the table of the churches (g) indicates that the church was first

*Pasquotank* (g)1—Henry Abbot & James Camel
*Bartee*—James Abbington, dead
*Quehuky* (g) (2)—William Burges.
*Tar-river-falls,* (g) 5—John Moore.
*Tosneot,* (g) 7—Jonathan Thomas.
members 172
first
—*Tar River*—Henry Ledbetter.
—*Fishing-creek,* (g) 4—William Walker.
*Red banks*— (g) 9—Jeremy Rheame.
*Great cohara* g—Edward Brown
Three-creeks (g) 6—(*Thos. Tully & James Camel*)
*Bladen-county,*—Stephen Hollingsworth.
*Stony-creek* (g) 10—George Graham.
*Swifts-creek* (g) 8—Joseph Willis
*Lower Fishing Creek* (g) 3—Charles Daniel
*Contantany* (a)—Joseph Parker.
*Pungo* (g) 11—William Fulsher, near the shore.

(On the left hand page beginning 7 lines from the bottom)
Contantany (a)—Joseph Parker.
Matchipungo (a)—William Fulsher.
Meherrin (a)—William Parker.
Bear River (a)— —— Winfield.

1. William Burges
2. William Surgenor
3. Joseph Parker*
4. William Walker*
5. John Moore*
6. Thomas Tully*
7. John Thomas*
8. Joseph Willis*
9. Jeremy Rheame*
10. George Graham*

Evangelist, Hart,
Ledbetter,*
Smart*

Paul Palmer gathered a chh at New River in the borders of S C[15]

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a General Baptist church, (a) that the church was in Edwards's time still Arminian, or General Baptist. The names following the names of the churches were those of the ministers at the time Edwards was writing. The names referred to by numbers are those of the first pastors of the churches indicated. The stars seem to indicate evangelists or itinerant preachers. The numbers are in chronological order. The number 11 set against Pungo is omitted below, where it should have been set against the name of Evangelist Hart, of whch according to Edwards's statement elsewhere he was the founder. (5) The General Baptist churches Contantony (Contentnea) with Joseph Parker as pastor, and Pungo with Williams Fulsher as pastor were never, as indicated by Edwards, members of the Kehukee Association. But at Pungo the Regular Baptists built a church in the same church yard and soon absorbed much of the membership of the older church, and in the Contentnea section the Regular Baptist church at Toisnot had a branch. Hence Edwards's confusion. The Arminian churches indicated in small Roman type at the foot of the table were not intended to be included by Edwards in the Kehukee list.

[15] This is the only reference to Paul Palmer in Edwards's notebook for North Carolina. We have seen that he excised a reference to him that he

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## LOWER FISHING CREEK

So distinguished from a creek which empties itself into the Tar River; near to which the meeting house stands in the parish of Edgecombe and county of Halifax, 120 miles NW from Newburn, and —— miles SSW from Philadelphia. The church consists of 3 branches; one near Fishing-Creek, where is a place of worship 40 feet by 20, built in 1757, on an acre of land the gift of James Wyat, snr; another on Swift Creek 8 miles off, the other in Rocky-Swamp, 12 miles off where is a meeting house. No estate; no salary; but the people have offered it, and by their number and ability they could easily make it 100 l. Ruling elders admitted; no laying on of hands. Devoting children used. The families about 350 whereof 74

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pursons are baptised and in communion, which is here celebrated the 2nd Sunday in may, Aug., Nov., Feb., and at Rocky-Swamp the 1st in May, Aug., Nov., Feb. The minister is Rev. Charles Daniel, who has William Powell to his assistance. Their beginning was in this manner: From the beginning they had been a society belonging to Mr. Parker for about 8 years, and on the arminian plan; but Oct. 13, 1756, the following pursons were formed into a church on the Calvinistic order by the help of Rev. Thomas Pope, viz: James Wyat, Snr. Nathaniel Powell, Mary Cullender, Francis Spivy, Sarah Spivy, James Wyat, Jun. no very remarkable events, except that it increased faith and is a mother church; that in the meadows near Roanoak being its offspring. The

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first minister since the reform is the present, viz:

### REV. CHARLES DANIEL

Born January — 1731, near Richmond in Virginia. Bred a churchman; embraced the principles of the Baptists in the Spring of 1749, and had the ordinance administered to him by Rev.

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first included in his account of the Tar River church. This instance will indicate how painstaking Edwards was to avoid all reference to the work of the General Baptists. Probably his Particular Baptist informers were as reticent. It will be observed that Mr. Edwards places New River in South Carolina, whereas it was in Onslow County, North Carolina. In his notebook on South Carolina Baptists, in a note under his table of the Charleston Association, Edwards has the following with reference to Palmer: "Rev. Paul Palmer was the father of the general Baptists in North Carolina, about 30 years ago." In his *Materials* for North Carolina Edwards has only a very brief and erroneous sketch of Mr. Palmer.

Josiah Hart at Fishing Creek. Ordained August 16, 1753, by said Hart and Rev. Henry Ledbetter at said Fishing-Creek. But in 1755 changed his sentiments towards the doctrines of grace, chiefly by means of reading Mr. Whitfield's sermons; became minister of this church soon after the time of the constitution, November 15, 1756. Married Amy Clark, but has no issue. He is reputed a knowing and wise man

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and therefore often consulted in civil affairs. He dropped preaching from the time he suspected the orthodoxy of his first principles, till he was settled in the doctrines of Grace, and had the assurance that he himself was in a state of grace.[16]

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## TAR RIVER FALLS[17]

So called from the part of Tar River near to which the meeting house stands, in the county of Edgecomb, 110 miles NW from Newburn and — miles SSW from Philadelphia. The church consists of 2 branches, one near said Falls where is a place of worship 30 feet by 20, erected in 1764 on a lot of one acre, the gift of Wm Horn; the other near the mouth of Swift's creek 15 miles off.[18] The families about 100 where of 64 pursons are baptised and in communion, which is here celebrated the 3rd Sunday in Jan., Apr., Jul., Sept. No estate. The salary, but presents to the amount of about 20 l. Ruling elders admitted. No laying on of hands. They had their begin-

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ning by a kind of transformation from General ——— into Particular Baptists. The means were: Rev. John Moore and wife, Robert Surgenor and wife, Peter Herington and wife, John Baker. These 7 pursons were (dec 3, 1757) incorporated by help of Rev. Charles Daniel. The most remarkable events are

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[16] The *Minutes of the Kehukey Association,* p. 11, indicate that it was for moral delinquency that Daniel was silenced. This is corroborated by Burkitt and Read's statement, *Kehukee Association,* 235.

[17] This church is today a church of the Primitive Baptists in Rocky Mount.

[18] The Swift Creek church here mentioned was near the mouth of that stream and in *Kehukee Association* is called "Edgecombe County" with Elder John Tanner as pastor. It had become a Separate Baptist church in 1777. It is not to be confused with the Swift Creek which is mentioned above as a branch of Lower Fishing Creek, and which was located somewhere near the site of the town of Battleboro.

(1) They had been a society for about 12 years before on the Arminian plan, first Mr. Moore by reading Fisher's marrow of modern Divinity and Bynian's Law and Grace, also conversing with William Wallis; then the congregation was brought over to the same sentiments. The first minister is the present

REV. JOHN MOORE

He has John Tanner to his assistance. Mr. Moore was born

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in Nansymond county in Virginia, Aug. 13, 1717. Bred a Churchman. Baptised September 1746, by William Surgenor. Ordained Octber 30, 1748 by said Surgenor and Josiah Hart, Became minister of this church at its constitution. He was remarkably sober from his youth, but was convinced of the sin of his nature by reading the 3rd Sermon of Sam. Smith, called *The Great Assize.* He was in this trouble for 15 years, and never got rest to his soul till he embraced the doctrines of grace. He married Sarah Meredith, by whom he has children: John, Elizabeth, Keziah, Bethsheba, Elisha, Lewis, Sarah.

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### KEHUKEY[19]

Distinguished by the name of a Creek emptying into Roanoak near to which the meeting house stands in the county of Halifax, 120 miles NW from Newburn, and — miles SSW Philadelphia. The house is 40 feet by 20, built in 1742, on land given by the late William Sojourner.[20] No estate, no salary, except presents. Elders and laying on of hands admitted. The families about 150. whereof 150 pursons are baptised and in communion, here celebrated the first Lord's day in Feb., May, Ag., Nov. The present minister, Rev. William Burgess. They began in the following manner Several of the old General Baptists embraced the doctrines of grace by means

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of Wm. Wallis. Their names were: Rev. Thomas Pope and wife, Abraham Dew, Abner Andrews, Richard Bailey, John Rhodes,

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[19] "Kehukey" is written also in the *Minutes of Kehukey Association.* ("James Sprunt Historical Monograph No. 5"). In his *Materials* Edwards writes "Quehuky." Burkitt and Read write "Kehukee," the spelling now adopted.

[20] Elsewhere in his notebook Edwards writes "Surgenor," which seems to indicate that the name was accented on the first syllable.

John Moore, Francis Spivy, Jane Bryant, Elizabeth Atkinson; these ten pursons were dec 11, 1755 by means of Messrs. Miller and Vanhorn, incorporated into a distinct church. The most remarkable things are: (1) This is the first church in the province of particular Baptists, and mother of Bartee and Notaway (to be constituted June 13, 1772). (2) This had been a General Baptist chh since 1742 and had Wm. Sojourner, Edward Brown, to their ministers, and then Pope, (Sojourner died February 18. 1749-50—aged 43 years and 7 months, Married Mary West *alias* Widow Boykin, by whom he had children, Jacob, Ann, Tamer. Brown is alive). The first minister was

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### REV. THOMAS POPE[21]

Born near Blackwater in Virginia. Bred a churchman, Baptised by Mr. Sojourner. Ordained about 1751. Took care of the church after Brown. And resumed it at the new constitution in 1755. Died March 1, 1762. Married Alice Foreman (*alias* Widow Ford) by whom he had children, Edy, Amos; he single; she married Richard Hamlin. After Mr. Pope, Mr. Charles Daniel supplied them. Then came on

### REV. JOHN MEGLAMRE.

Born January 7, 1730, in Maryland. Bred a Presbyterian. Baptised by Rev. William Walker at Fishing-creek the 3rd Sunday in May 1765. Ordained the 2d Sunday in February 1767 by Mess. Daniel, Abbot, and Moore. Took up the

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care of the church in 1768. Resigned May 2, 1772, in favor of Mr. Burgess. Married Lettice Nelms, by whom he has children. Sarah, Ann, Elizabeth. His successor of the present

### REV. WILLIAM BURGESS.

Born, December 24, 1721, at Pasquotank. Baptised by William Burgess. Ordained May 2, 1772, by Messrs Moore, Edwards, Meglamre and Thomas. at which time he took care of the church. Married Sarah Scarborough, after her Penelope Bryant; his children, Mary, Malachi, Elizabeth, Mourning, Bryant, Winifred, Dempsy, John, Sarah.

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[21] This second sketch of Pope is more accurate than that given above.

## XI

## THE SEPARATE BAPTISTS

In the former chapters I have traced the rise and development of the General Baptists and their transformation into churches of Particular Baptists. Contemporaneous with this transformation was the rise of an entirely distinct and different kind of Baptists, the Separates. In 1755 they came to Sandy Creek in the present county of Randolph and began their work. I make bold to say that these Separate Baptists have proved to be the most remarkable body of Christians America has known. The truth of this statement will become manifest as we consider the fervent missionary and evangelizing zeal of Stearns and his fellow laborers; his departure from his New England home under the impulse of that zeal not knowing whither he went, but consciously led by the Spirit of the Lord toward some place in the west where he was to perform a great work; under such divine leadership coming to Sandy Creek and there setting up worship; the immediate and almost miraculous success of his labors and those of ministers of the word raised up under his preaching; the wide extent of his influence extending from the Potomac to the Savannah and beyond; the powerful manifestations of divine grace that attended his preaching, and the unceasing progress from that day to this of these Separates, who though after a third of a century amalgamated with other Baptists have yet given tone and character to the general body of Baptists and have made them the most numerous Protestant denomination in the South and in the Union at large.

Following my usual method I first indicate the general conditions of the people among whom these Separate Baptists had their rise and early development.

The coming of the Separate Baptists was about contemporaneous with the coming of Governor Arthur Dobbs to the Province. He arrived at New Bern and entered upon his administration on October 31, 1754; Shubal Stearns and his company arrived at Sandy Creek a year later. At this time the Province was in a state of vigorous growth in wealth, productions and population.[1] The inhabitants now numbered not less than 100,000, four-fifths of whom were whites. The character of these people, their religious, social and industrial development may be better understood when considered in groups according to the section of the Province in which they were settled.

### RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

For one division we take the territory lying between the Neuse and the South Carolina line and extending as far west as Anson County. In this section there were probably at this time twenty-five thousand people. The greater number had come in the past dozen years. Negro slaves composed two-thirds of the population on the lower Cape Fear, and possibly one-third in the section around New Bern, but were relatively much fewer in the other eastern counties, and very few in the newer settlements west of Johnston County.[2] In 1755 there were 362 white taxables and 1,375 black taxables in New Hanover County which then included what is now Pender and part of Brunswick. There were a few families, about twenty, in and around Brunswick, "of the best in the Province," owning each "great gangs of slaves." It was these families and others like them in other counties of the east which controlled the affairs of the counties in which they lived and set the standards of society and of morals and religion. Very early these large slave-holding families had given the social life of this section an especially distinctive character, and a keen observer remarked that the inhabitants were as different from those of the parts where slaves were few as if they had been composed of two different opposing states.[3]

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[1] Saunders, *Colonial Records*, V, Introduction.

[2] *Colonial Records*, IV, 607, statement of Rev. James Moir: *Colonial Records*, VI, 235, statement of Rev. John MacDowell.

South of the Cape Fear River, with the exception of the Scotch in Cumberland, there were hardly more than two hundred families. These lived at great distances from one another or in widely scattered neighborhoods. Often even in the settlements on the lower Cape Fear the Missionary of the Society going to his little chapel would ride fifteen or twenty miles without seeing a house to shelter him from the thunder showers or other inclemencies of the weather.[4] There were thicker settlements on Rockfish and Black River in Duplin County, then including Sampson. Another fairly populous neighborhood was in Onslow County on the various branches of New River, which section even then on account of the fertility of the soil had the name of Rich Lands.[5] Further west in Johnston County where swamps were fewer the inhabitants were more regularly distributed. But it is well to keep in mind in considering any aspect of the life of these early settlers that they were widely scattered and that the neighborhoods were often segregated by streams and swamps which were crossed by roads only at wide intervals.[6]

The people had only meagre religious advantages. All of the royal governors, Burrington, Johnston, Dobbs, had received the strictest instructions from the Crown to procure such legislation as would promote the progress of religion in the Province, and they had been faithful to make proper recommendations, as they thought, to the General Assembly. But in this they met with no great success.

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[3] *Colonial Records,* IV, 607.

[4] *Colonial Records,* VI, 235, letter of Rev. John MacDowell.

[5] *Colonial Records,* V, 352f.

[6] The census of 1755 showed that these counties had a total militia of 4,002, Johnston having the largest number, 854.

Governor Burrington, in his short administration from 1732 to 1734, as excuse for his unsuccessful efforts, reported that the former missionaries by their vicious lives had given so much offense to the people that they were indifferent whether any more should come or not. The people had by private contributions built chapels in some places where at times a clerk read the common service or a printed sermon. There were two preachers living in the Cape Fear region without regular charge, but no regularly constituted minister of the Church of England in the Province during his administration.[7]

Burrington's successor, Governor Gabriel Johnston, in a much longer administration of eighteen years accomplished almost as little. Writing in 1736, he attributed his failure to get such legislation as he recommended for the Establishment to the fear that the Assemblymen had of offending their electors.[8] Later in the same year he spoke of the deplorable and almost total want of divine worship through the Province. Thereafter he continued to make representation of the need for better provision for public worship to every session of the Assembly. In his message of 1739 he declared "That in such a wide and extended Province as this inhabited by British subjects, by persons professing themselves Christians, there should be but two places where divine service is regularly performed is really scandalous; it is a reproach peculiar to this part of His Majesty's Dominion which you ought to remove without loss of time."[9] Though in 1741 the Assembly had passed a lengthy vestry act, it did not bring the result desired by Governor Johnston and he continued as late as 1749 to berate the Assembly on its failure to maintain the church.[10] But it was due not so much to lack of legislation as to the general distrust throughout the Province of the ministers of the Church of England, and in part doubtless to a reprehensible apathy on all religious concerns, that Governor Johnston despairingly cried in the last years of his administration that he had been engaged for fifteen years in endeavoring to civilize a wild and barbarous people and put them on a par with those of the neighboring provinces.[11]

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[7] *Colonial Records*, III, 152, 429.

[8] *Colonial Records*, IV, 178.

[9] *Colonial Records*, IX, 357.

When Governor Arthur Dobbs reached New Bern in October, 1754, except for a young minister who had recently come to Wilmington, there was not and had not been for years a minister of the gospel in all the southern part of the Province. Governor Dobbs with all the ardor of his Irish nature urged support of the Establishment. He had the satisfaction of seeing several vestry acts passed during his administration of eleven years, but all except the last were so unsatisfactory to the Bishop of London that he refused to sanction them.

About the time Governor Dobbs arrived in the Province the Rev. James Reed came to New Bern, and was employed by the vestry of Christ Church Parish in Craven County. Remaining in the Province for twenty years he proved in many respects a very worthy man and the most influential of the Episcopal ministers who labored in North Carolina before the Revolution.

In January, 1754, an ardent young minister of the Church of England had come to Wilmington and had been employed by the vestry of St. James' Parish. This was Rev. John MacDowell. But before considering his work we first review the previous religious life of this section.

In 1728 Rev. John LaPierre, who had been a missionary of the Society on the Santee River in South Carolina, had come to the Cape Fear. Here he labored for three years and six months being supported by the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants. Being faithful to rebuke sin among some of the chief men of the county who were living polygamous and incestuous lives, he lost favor with them.[12] At the same time opposition had arisen to him among those who had come under the influence of a man named Chubb, possibly an author of books, and some others, who probably belonged to a class called deists frequently heard of in the Province at this time, who had taught the people to "quibble and cavil about the Holy Scriptures."

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[10] *Colonial Records*, IV, 1009.

[11] *Colonial Records*, IV, 919.

But the chief reason, according to LaPierre's account, for the people becoming dissatisfied with him was financial. They no longer cared to pay him for preaching since the Rev. Richard Marsden had come to the Cape Fear and was offering to serve as their minister gratis. This Dr. Marsden was the same who had officiated at the first communion service held in the Province. He had been in South Carolina for many years but about 1729 had come to this section. Here he not only preached but also farmed, and became a merchant and a trafficant, engaging in the import trade.[13] His officiating without price among the people of the lower Cape Fear seemed to be very much in accord with their notions of what a minister ought to do, for, as LaPierre remarked, though they were very substantial farmers, they were unwilling to contribute money to build churches and glebes and for the proper support of ministers. LaPierre was left unpaid for the last months of his service and had to shift for himself and work in the fields for his living. He made a trip or two into Onslow and was seemingly acceptable to the people there. But the Society refused to appoint him a missionary to that county and he never got another charge. He occasionally preached before the Assembly which on one occasion voted him fifty pounds as a stipend, and was still living when Governor Dobbs came to the Province.

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[12] *Colonial Records,* III, 624.

[13] *Colonial Records,* III, 529-30. About 1732 Marsden and the elder Cornelius Harnett purchased the cargo of a wrecked ship from its master, John Tate; after salvaging the cargo and refusing to pay for it were sued by Tate in the court. *Colonial Records,* III, 400f.

Dr. Marsden following the suggestion of Governor Burrington preached in Onslow in 1732, being at that time one of the two Episcopalian clergymen in the Province.[14] He ministered chiefly to the people of the Cape Fear. At length he repented of preaching gratis to an unappreciative people. They came to his services for the loaves and fishes. In 1735 he complained that he had not only preached for them freely for four years in his own house but had given the greater part of his congregations dinner every Sunday. In the meantime he had been rebuked by the Society for some unnamed offense, probably the Tate matter, and had confessed his guilt and begged pardon. But he could report 1,300 baptisms, for which likewise he had never received a farthing, and declared that "love is the spring and of all my performances, which makes me undergo my toilsome service with the utmost cheerfulness."[15]

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[14] The other was Rev. Bevil Granville, who on his way to a charge in another Province had been induced to stop in North Carolina, where he preached in Bath and Edenton, and in a year baptized a thousand children. *Colonial Records*, III, 339, 342. His friends, however, seem to have expected him to live on nothing; as he found this impossible he fell into debt. To escape prosecution by his creditors he fled from the Province at the end of his first year. See General Court Papers in the Library of State Historical Commission, November 24, 1732.

[15] *Colonial Records*, IV, 10ff. The following expressions from him will help us understand something of the hard lot of a missionary in those days: "Four years I preached here freely at my own house without demanding or expecting anything for my pains, and gave the greater part of my congregation dinner every Sunday, and did not receive in all the time any consideration; and some weeks with a laborious diligence I traveled 60 or 70 miles to preach and baptize and returned home against Sabbath day; and I hope it was not simply unlawful for me to endeavor to subsist myself by employing what little I had in trade in an honest way to preserve it; where many of the inhabitants here are in such mean circumstances that they cannot maintain a minister."

Having suffered some reverses and having agreed with the vestry to serve for a salary of one hundred pounds, he was never paid one-fifth of it, though in two years' time he spent twice the promised salary in

Mr. Marsden continued to preach in the Cape Fear region until his death about the end of the year 1742.[16] Shortly before, about 1740, another preacher of the Church of England, the Rev. James Moir came to Wilmington. For the first year he served all the old New Hanover County. In 1741 the Assembly made two parishes in the county, St. James in that part north of the Cape Fear river with Wilmington as its chief town, and St. Philip on the south of the river with Brunswick as its chief town. During part of the year 1741-42 he remained with the parish of St. James, but finding that the vestry were ready to drive a hard bargain with him, he went to the town of Brunswick, between which and Wilmington there existed an intense rivalry, and remained there for several years. Finally in 1747 he left this section and went to Edgecombe where he remained for many years and was not only an able and successful preacher but a great politician, one who coped successfully with the Governor and Council of State.[17] During the time he was on the Cape Fear he wrote many letters to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which reveal much of the religious condition of the people among whom he labored. He supposed that one-half of the white people of New Hanover and a majority of the vestry of St. James were Dis-

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traveling expenses, and by being away from home had to allow "the great neglect of my plantation, which would be a certain maintenance if I could allow myself to continue at home, and mind the business of it." And he went on to say: "I have run myself into a great many inconveniences and am now at an advanced age and under difficult circumstances, and not so capable as I have been to perform every toilsome service, but however, I shall never be sparing of myself for fear of shortening my days for I am truly sensible that the lamp of my life can never burn better than in endeavoring to light others to heaven. . . . I have no library, no books but only the Bible, Burket on the New Testament and Common Prayer Book but what I borrowed, and truly there are very few Bibles, Common Prayer Books, books of devotion &c, in this Province. Indeed, my Lord, it would be a great act of charity without delay to supply this part of the Province at least with good Books."

Mr. Marsden died about the year 1742. He left a family; his granddaughter, Mary Hayes, became the wife of Col. Hugh Waddell, and the ancestress of the Waddell family of this section.

[16] *Colonial Records*, IV, 621.

[17] Turner and Bridgers, *History of Edgecombe County.*

senters. He had trouble all along with the vestries, first with that of St. James and later with that of St. Philip. These vestries did not pay him the promised salary and at the end of a few years he sued in the courts for that part still due for his first years, one hundred and sixty-one pounds. He had been sent to this section by the Society to be an itinerant minister. As such he looked after all the settlements between the Neuse and the South Carolina line. In his contracts with the vestries he stipulated that he should have time to travel and preach outside his parish. But the vestries were very exacting, insisting that he should not leave them even to hold a communion service except on the specified Sundays. In St. James' the meanest of the people were unwilling to bring their children to the public service for baptism but expected him to go to their houses to baptize them, and to be instant in responding to their requests to conduct funerals. His salary was badly paid, and in commodities, sometimes in rice at six shillings a hundred-weight, about three times the Charleston price, and for which he had no sale in the Province, even at a shilling a hundredweight. In view of this tendency to overrate the price of commodities, by which according to law debts might be paid, Mr. Moir declared that, "The essential branch of the Constitution of the Province is to do as little justice as possible to Creditors." Having agreed to furnish him a house the vestry provided him with a garret. When he traveled he was not entertained except at the most extravagant charges for the most wretched accommodations. Despairing of obtaining the proper encouragement here and also being a prey to the intermittent fevers of the section he left for Edgecombe about Easter, 1747.[18]

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[18] See his numerous letters in the fourth volume of the *Colonial Records.* Some historians call Moir querulous. Possibly he was, but he is not alone in his complaint of the vestries of St. James and St. Philip. Every minister who served them complained. Moir had reason. Take the following from his letter of March 26, 1745, *Colonial Records,* IV, 755: "My letters of April and October have informed the venerable Society how

After the departure of Moir for Edgecombe early in the year 1747 both the parish of St. James and that of St. Philip seem to have had no regular minister for several years. In January, 1754, Rev. John MacDowell, mentioned above, who was a zealous young minister of an evangelical turn, was employed by the vestry of St. James and continued with that church until May, 1757, in the time performing divine service not only in Wilmington and the outlying chapels and other places of worship in the parish, but also traveling in the neighboring parishes. He was given a good name by the vestry. From here he went to Brunswick, where he remained serving as minister of St. Philip until his death in 1763. At Brunswick he found about a dozen communicants, and the largest church building in the Province, but still without roof and not to be completed during his ministry. He served at Wilmington, and until 1760 at Brunswick, as a minister independent of the Society, looking to the vestries alone for his support, but in that year on the recommendation of the vestries and Governor Dobbs he was accepted as a Missionary of the Society. Like the former missionaries, Marsden and Moir, he reserved part of his time for journeys in the neighboring counties, on some of which he spent two or three weeks, preaching and baptizing every day. In the meantime he had married a young woman of some property, part of it consisting of a half dozen slaves. Until he became missionary of the Society his salary had been one hundred pounds in provincial currency, but as he was to receive fifty pounds from the Society the vestry cut his salary ten pounds and imposed

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I agreed with the vestry to continue their minister another year upon their promising me a house. They imagine their promise made good by giving me leave to lodge in the garrett of a little house. Below it serves for a chapel of a Sunday and for a school through the week days. My slave cooks for himself in the open air, and I am obliged to shift from place to place for a dinner or supply, frequenting their taverns or public houses of entertainment much against my inclinations indeed, for I think them the worst places upon the face of the earth in more respects than one, and what is still more provoking they wonder that being thus situated I do not fancy myself in Paradise sometimes."

harder duties upon him. Since his marriage he had found his salary so small that he could not have continued at his work had he not used his wife's fortune to supplement what the vestry paid him. He brought these things to the attention of the vestry. But it was inexorable; it would add nothing to his salary but told him pretty plainly that if he was not satisfied with what he was receiving and with his work he could go elsewhere. Thus having to furnish his own horses for his long missionary journeys and having to pay house rent as well as high prices for provisions, he was forced to part with one negro after another. In 1760, his wife died in childbed, the child dying at the same time, leaving him a widower with an infant about a year old. Then he had heavy doctor's bills to pay and other expenses incident to his wife's sickness and death. But even such afflictions as these did not ameliorate the treatment he was receiving from the vestry, several of whom were worldly and indecent men with no respect for religion. Their treatment of him was just such, he said, as he had previously received at Wilmington. He had some thoughts of returning home where he thought he could live happier on a little farm than if governor on the Cape Fear. But he was soon to go home indeed, but to his home in heaven. After a lingering disease he died in November, 1763. It is impossible to read his letters and not feel that he was a man of genuine piety and much zeal for the spiritual welfare of his parishioners, and that his complaints of ill treatment were well justified.[19]

After the death of Mr. MacDowell no other minister of the Church of England was to be found in the Cape Fear region for several years. Rev. Michael Smith had been at Wilmington in the year 1759-60, having abandoned his charge in Johnston County without leave of the Society, which infraction of their discipline the Society did not tolerate in spite of strong representations made in his favor by the vestry and some prominent men of Wilmington. He was forced to leave and no other came in his place. When Governor Dobbs died at Brunswick in 1765 there was no minister of the Church of England in a hundred miles, and his burial service was conducted by a justice of the peace.[20]

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[19] *Colonial Records*, VI, 225f., 236ff., 552ff.,1039, 239.

There seems to have been at this time a considerable Presbyterian element among the inhabitants of the southeastern part of the Province. In February and March, 1756, Rev. Hugh McAden, the young Presbyterian minister of whom I have spoken above, after preaching on the upper Cape Fear passed down the river towards Wilmington. At a Mr. Beard's, on February 1, probably near the present town of Lillington, he preached to a "mixed multitude, some Presbyterians, some church people, some Baptists, and don't know but some Quakers." He was at Bladen courthouse the next Sunday and at Wilmington the next, February 15. Here he had a good congregation at the morning service but at a second service in the afternoon only about a dozen. The lack of interest thus shown depressed his spirits and on the Tuesday following he left Wilmington, going about forty miles north to what was known as Welsh Tract. Making this his headquarters he preached in the surrounding country as far as Black River and South River and the northwest branch of the Cape Fear. He remained until March 18, when the congregation on Rockfish put in a call for his services. Accordingly, having been ordained in 1757, he returned and took up the work of the ministry at Rockfish in Duplin County on July 18, 1759, serving also other Presbyterian congregations in this section. Here he remained about ten years, when because of the unfavorable influence of the climate on his health he left and until his death in January, 1781, served the congregation at Hico in Caswell County.[21]

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[20] Statement of Governor Tryon, *Colonial Records,* VII, 103.

[21] Except in Wilmington, which did not have a Presbyterian church "until long after the Revolution" (Foote), he found the people most

### CONDITIONS IN THE CENTRAL COUNTIES

To meet the needs of the immigrants who were pouring into the middle section, four new counties had been recently formed embracing all the territory of the Province to the west of Bladen, Johnston and Granville. These were Cumberland, Anson, Orange and Rowan. Within the last ten years the population of these four counties had shown wonderful increase. In 1746, according to a report of Matthew Rowan, they contained scarcely 100 fighting men; but in 1753 there were in Cumberland a full thousand Scotch Highland settlers able to bear arms, and in the other three frontier counties no fewer than three thousand, and the total population of the four was as much as 20,000. For the next dozen years, 1753 to 1765, these counties and that part of Anson which in 1762 was erected into Mecklenburg continued to increase greatly in population, although immigration was seriously checked during the progress of the French and Indian war, 1754 to 1763, in which period the attacks of the Cherokees drove back the frontiersmen on the west and for a few years put an end to the expansion of the Province in that direction. In 1759 many who had settled between the Yadkin and the Catawba were forced to fly for safety and sought refuge to the eastward in the present counties of Guilford, Alamance, Chatham and Randolph, where some made their permanent homes. Others driven by

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ready to hear the Gospel and eager to have Christian worship among them. A small congregation in Bladen made cheerful efforts to get a sufficient subscription to engage him. But he found also some infidelity, which he supposed was due to the neglect of religion. Infidels are often mentioned in reports on the religious condition of the Province, but it is not exactly clear as to their character. Rev. John Garzia, writing from Bath in 1742 (*Colonial Records,* IV, 604) said that the number of "Heathens & Infidels" in his parish amounted to two thousand. The Rev. James Reed estimated the number of "Infidels & Heathens" in Craven County in 1760 at one thousand. In the number of the Heathen he included nearly all the Negroes in the county, since he said that he had no time to instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion and their masters were not enough concerned to do so. *Colonial Records,* VI, 265.

a like fear of attack by Indians had shortly after Braddock's defeat in 1755 come to the same section from the Valley of Virginia. Some of these Virginians had gone to the Mecklenburg settlements, where in the September of that year, 1755, Rev. Hugh McAden, while on his way from the Yadkin to the southern settlements, fell in with a company of them, of whom he says:

> Came up with a large company of men, women and children, who had fled for their lives from the Cow or Calf pasture of Virginia; from whom I received the melancholy account that the Indians were still doing a great deal of mischief in those parts by murdering and destroying several of the inhabitants and banishing the rest from houses and livings, whereby they are forced to fly into desert places.[22]

During the period of the war Governor Dobbs supposed that the previous great influx of immigrants into this section had ceased, and that the considerable increase of the population was due to births, as well he might, since nearly all the families settled on his lands on Rocky River had, so far as he "viewed" them, five to ten children each. But the tide of immigrants though checked somewhat by the war flowed in increased volume as soon as peace was made. Orange County which had 810 white taxables in 1755 had 2,825 in 1765. In 1767 the number had grown to 3,573, or one-fifth of all reported in the Province. Rowan had nearly as many, while Mecklenburg cut off from Anson in 1762 and including what is now Cabarrus had 2,163 white and colored taxables.[23]

The reader will keep in mind that at the time of the coming of Shubal Stearns in 1755 there were only from twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants in these central and western counties. Several large bodies of land in tracts of twelve thousand acres had been patented in this section by such men as Dobbs and McCulloh, and there were many who had entered smaller tracts of as many acres as they cared to pay quit rents for. Groups of these smaller farmers were seated in neighborhoods, but there were wide stretches of country in which there were no settlers. Some parts, as the red lands in the territory of the present county of Chatham and along the streams, were well wooded. Governor Dobbs tells of a journey he made through this section in June, 1755, where except along the banks of the rivers he could never see above a mile because of the trees; but once he rode to the top of a hill lying near the road, he saw "as far as the eye could reach from the westward by the north to the southeast a fair prospect of well wooded hills." But here and there east of the Yadkin and in general to the west of that river extended great prairies, which were very attractive to settlers. Herman Husband's first patent was for lands on "the desolate meadows of Love's Creek," to the south of the present town of Siler City, while of the region west of the Yadkin Foote says:

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[22] Foote, *Sketches*, p. 168.

[23] These figures are taken from the lists in volumes V, VI and VII of the *Colonial Records*.

> Emigration (immigration) was encouraged and directed very much in its earliest periods, by the vast prairies, with pea-vine hay and cane brakes, which stretched across the States of Virginia and Carolina. There are large forests now (1846) in these two States, where a hundred years ago, not a tree, and scarce a shrub could be seen. These prairies abounded with game, and supplied abundant pasturage, both winter and summer, for the various kinds of stock that accompanied the emigrants, and formed for years no small part of their wealth.[24]

But after these were parceled out into farms, and fields were cultivated, the annual fires which the Indians had used to insure a crop of early grass no longer destroyed the tender sprouts and forests sprang up as if by magic on all uncultivated or unmowed lands.

Of the first settlers in this territory a considerable portion came in well defined religious groups––Quakers, Moravians,

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[24] Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina,* p. 79.

Lutherans, Presbyterians. These were able to form congregations and maintain a measure of religious worship, though all of them except the Quakers and Moravians suffered from want of ministers.

The first Quaker settlement in the central portion of North Carolina was near the present village of Snow Camp on Cane Creek, from which it extended in all directions, but especially to the south as far as Bear Creek and to the west as far as Deep River. Here a monthly meeting was established in December, 1751, at which time there were some thirty families in the section, some of whom had been there as early as 1748. In the four years 1751-54 sixty-eight certificates were presented to this meeting, of which only twenty-eight were from Pennsylvania, the remainder from other Quaker settlements in North Carolina and the other colonies, except one from Ireland. By the year 1757 the Quakers had built five meeting-houses, and then wanted one or two more. Some of the places of worship were at New Garden, Deep River, Eno, and Oakley, the last three miles west of the present town of Ore Hill.

Almost contemporaneous with the settlement of Quakers on Cane Creek was their coming to New Garden, the present site of Guilford College. Here a settlement was made about 1750 and the monthly meeting organized in 1754, by which time the colony had grown to be considerable. During the sixteen years, 1754-70, eighty-six certificates were received, of which twenty-four represented families. Of these forty-five came from Pennsylvania, thirty-five from Virginia, one from Maryland, and four from northeastern North Carolina.[25]

These early Quaker settlers had their own teachers and preachers and were often visited by traveling brethren. Their plan of organization and the nature of their discipline tended to promote and preserve morality and religion among those in the society and their families. They were industrious and frugal. Thus they became influential and respected and in many ways examples to the other settlers. But when following the precepts of their religion they refused to join with their fellow citizens in the war to secure independence, they came to be regarded as a peculiar people and almost as a foreign element in the population. Later their views on slavery emphasized this distinction and many of them left the South for the non-slave states. We have seen that they were the first to support organized Christian worship in the early settlements in the Albemarle; they were likewise the first to do this in central North Carolina. But in this section as well as in the east, because of their peculiar tenets, they made few proselytes, and left the field open for evangelists of the Baptist faith.

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[25] Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, pp. 102ff.

The Moravians were a compact group, settled on a tract of land of nearly one hundred thousand acres which embraced the section around the present city of Winston-Salem. They began their settlement in 1753; by 1776 they had six settlements and a population estimated at five hundred.[26] They were a company of Protestants who had been driven from their native country, the Marquisate of Moravia in Austria, by persecution, and had a plan of church organization so much like that of the Church of England that they were given a kind of standing as a branch of that church and the Episcopalian ministers visited them and sometimes baptized their children. Their colony was organized on the communistic order, with a proper division of trades and professions, but with all the products of their toil common property, and every member of the community receiving the services of preacher and physician without individual charge or obligation. Their great industry, intelligence, sobriety and good order made them the most influential community in the western counties. Although they were already great promoters of missions in Greenland and in other foreign parts they were not able to minister religiously to the other settlers of North Carolina. On the other hand, they did not invite the efforts of missionaries of other faiths among themselves.

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[26] Caruthers, *Life of Caldwell*, p. 89.

Much more numerous than the Moravians were the German settlers of this region who belonged to the Lutheran church and the German Reformed Church. Nearly all these Germans had first settled in Pennsylvania, and finding lands difficult to procure there had come to North Carolina. One group of them settled in the section which is now the eastern half of the southern part of Guilford and the western half of the southern part of Alamance, with the settlements extending southward into Chatham and Randolph. Another group, according to Bernheim,[27] "arranged themselves on the vacant lands to the eastward and westward of the Yadkin river, whilst the Scotch-Irish from the same Province (Pennsylvania), who had always lived on friendly terms with their German neighbors in Pennsylvania, soon followed them southward, and occupied vacant lands to the westward of the German settlers." They first came about the year 1750 and continued to come for several years. They were good, industrious, thrifty farmers, without political ambition, speaking the German language, with enough education to read Dr. Luther's Bible and the songs in the German Union Hymn-Book. They lived contented and easy, enjoying the social pleasures of rural neighborhoods, and seem to have desired nothing better. At first they were all Lutherans, but later in both settlements the greater number, assimilating their religious views to those of their English neighbors, became what were first known as German Reformed and later simply as Reformed. They did not bring ministers with them, but "sermons and prayers were usually read on Sunday by their German school-teacher, and whenever they were permitted to enjoy the regular administration of the preached word and sacraments, which was but seldom, it was afforded them by some self-appointed missionary, whilst their school-teacher usually buried their dead with an appropriate ceremony from the German liturgy, and in case of urgent necessity baptized their children."[28] Of the general character of these preachers we learn much from Rev. E. W. Caruthers, the pastor of Alamance church, who lived as their neighbor from an early period. He says that these self-appointed preachers were few and not such as to stimulate piety or improve the character of their hearers. They had no kind of authority to preach and did not live such lives as to recommend them to the confidence of the churches. They were wanderers from Germany or the northern provinces, and were tolerated only because the people in their destitution were glad to welcome any one who came to them as a minister of the Gospel. It was only by their effrontery that they were able to impose themselves on people who knew no better. For a long time these German settlements suffered for want of ministers of the right kind. It was not until the period between 1770 and 1775 that their churches were organized, but before 1776 they numbered a full score. These German settlers were not much fewer than the Scotch-Irish, and their descendants are today to be found in all the middle and western sections of the State though swarms of them went as settlers to other states in the early decades of the last century. Until well after the year 1800 they continued to use the variety of German called "Pennsylvania Dutch," and on that account they were not to be reached by evangelists like Shubal Stearns who spoke only English.

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[27] *German Settlements,* etc., p. 151f.

Presbyterians were among the first settlers of the Province; the first colonial governor, William Drummond, was "an old-fashioned Scotch Presbyterian." Though they were few in the Proprietary period yet as early as 1735 they were said to have a minister of their own.[29] Presbyterians are often mentioned by the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel who labored in eastern North Carolina during this period. But during these years there was no regular Presbyterian congregation and no Presbyterian minister regularly established in the Province. Probably the first Presbyterian settlement was made in Duplin County in 1736, when Henry McCulloh induced some families from Ulster in Ireland to settle on his reservations there. About the same time some Presbyterian Welsh colonists occupied a section known as Welsh Tract somewhat nearer Wilmington.[30] In February, 1756, Rev. Hugh McAden remained several weeks among these settlers and preached, and in consequence received a call to become their minister as has been told above.

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Another group of Presbyterians was that composed of Scotch Highlanders, who beginning their settlements about 1736 had before the end of the Provincial period occupied almost the entire Cumberland County of that time. But before 1770 in the ship loads of these Scotch emigrants who found their home here not a single minister was found. In that year a company brought with them the Rev. John McLeod direct from the homeland. According to Foote,[31] these people were accustomed to public worship, but the lack of it for so many years after they had reached the colony, when the administration of the ordinances was almost forgotten, had an unhappy effect upon them and their children. Yet with the fires of religion kept burning here and there on a private altar these Highlanders retained to a greater degree than might have been expected a sense of religion.

They were not, however, left altogether destitute. In

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[29] Brickell, *North Carolina*, p. 236.

[30] Vass, *Presbyterian Church in New Bern*, 35f., Foote, *Sketches*, 78 and 159.

[31] Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 131.

1757, the Rev. James Campbell coming from Pennsylvania bought a plantation opposite the Bluff Church a few miles above Fayetteville and spent the years until his death in 1781 laboring among the Scotch settlers. Until 1770 he was the solitary preacher for these people scattered through the thinly inhabited territory of what are now the counties of Cumberland, Robeson, Moore and Hoke and part of Harnett. He established three regular churches whose members for the most part understood no English. Hence, Mr. Campbell preached to them in their native Gaelic, a language which continued to be used in the church services of these people for many years, not being discontinued before 1846. It was this bar of language that kept out the missionaries of Sandy Creek from all this section and held these Highlanders to the faith of their fathers.

The Presbyterian settlers mentioned above who came to Duplin were descendants of the Scotch who had settled in Ulster, a province of Ireland, and who on that account are called Scotch-Irish. Their ancestors were Scotch Lowlanders and spoke English, at least after their residence in Ulster. As early as 1736 Presbyterians of this heritage and stock were coming to the central and western counties of the Province. In that year a congregation of these people had erected a meeting house on the Eno in Orange County.[32] Within twenty years Presbyterians of this same Scotch-Irish stock, after a shorter or longer residence in Pennsylvania, had formed settlements and congregations in the region from Hillsboro to Salisbury northward to the Virginia line and southward roughly to the line of the North Carolina Railroad. West of the Yadkin and the German settlements along that river, the Presbyterians had numerous congregations extending into South Carolina to the south of the present city of Charlotte. In the fall of 1755 Rev. Hugh McAden had visited all and preached to these congregations: on the Eno in Orange; on the Hico in Caswell; at the Hawfields; in the Buffalo settlements near Greensboro; on the Yadkin; on the west of the Yadkin in all the Presbyterian congregations southward across the South Carolina line, in as many as seven meeting houses and at some private homes, in all as many as twenty sermons in this section.

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[32] Vass, *New Bern*, p. 32.

None of the congregations at the time of McAden's visit had pastors, though many of them had meeting houses. It was in 1758 that the Rev. Alexander Craighead was ordained pastor of the church at Rocky River, thus becoming the first regularly established Presbyterian minister west of the Yadkin. By the year 1765 there were seven congregations in the Mecklenburg district with limits fixed by order of the synod, but only that at Rocky River had a regular minister for many years.[33] Mr. Craighead died in 1767 leaving no resident Presbyterian minister in this section. Visiting ministers baptized their children and kept them to their Presbyteran faith. But perhaps their schoolmasters had equal if not greater influence in this regard. Governor Dobbs wrote that the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians on his lands in the neighborhood of Rocky River "had settled together in order to have a teacher of their own opinion and choice." Thus the children of these pioneers, "each going barefooted in their shifts in warm weather," were taught not only the usual branches of elementary education but were drilled in the rigid discipline of the Shorter Catechism, and could give offhand answers to questions that would puzzle doctors of the law. "Strict discipline in morals, and full instruction of youth and children," according to Foote,[34] "were taken to America by the emigrants, and have been characteristic of the Scotch-Irish settlements throughout the land." He goes on to say:

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[33] Foote, *Sketches*, p. 318.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

> Children were early taught to read, and exercised in reading the Bible every day; and became familiar with the word of God in the family, in the school and in the house devoted to the worship of Almighty God. Their moral principles were derived from the words of him who lives and abides forever; and the commands of God, and the awful retributions of eternity, gave force to these principles, which became a living power and a controlling influence. The time has just passed (1846), . . . when the children and youth at school recited the Shorter Catechism once a week, and read parts of the Bible every day.

Academic instruction of no mean kind was given in the Presbyterian settlements. The masters were the Presbyterian preachers, most of whom seem to have given private instruction on classical subjects to the promising young men of their congregations. Some of them went further and established academies in which they taught the young men gathered from the Presbyterian settlements and other parts of the Province. Three famous schools flourished in these settlements in the Provincial period. The first to be established was that of Sugar Creek near the northern limits of the city of Charlotte; another that of Rev. David Patillo in Granville and Warren. I mention last as by far the most famous and successful that of Rev. David Caldwell, pastor of the Buffalo church three miles north of the center of Greensboro. Here Dr. Caldwell fixed his residence in 1766 on a small farm occupying a hill the most beautiful for situation in all that part of the country. In the same year he married Rachel, third daughter of Rev. Alexander Craighead of Rocky River and Sugar Creek. About the same time he began both his pastorate and his school, continuing in both until nearly the time of his death in 1824. Of him and his school Mr. Foote says:

> Delighting in the employment of teacher, having a peculiar tact for the management of boys, and being thorough in his course of instruction, his school flourished, and was the means, during the long period of its continuance, of bringing more men into the learned professions than any other taught by a single individual or by a succession of teachers during the same period of time.

> Five of his scholars became Governors of States; a number were promoted to the bench, of whom were Murphy and McCoy; a larger number, supposed about fifty, became ministers of the gospel. . . . A large number were physicians and lawyers. Of those whose names have been mentioned as eminent, most, if not all, received their entire classical education from him, and the ministers of the gospel, in addition to that, their theological education; so that for a time, his school was academy, college, and theological seminary.[35]

Without going into more detail we may indicate the extent of the Presbyterian settlements in North Carolina at the close of the provincial period by the following list of ministers and their fields of labor, which Foote made from the records of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia for 1776:

> There were at this time the following ministers in North Carolina, viz.: James Campbell, who commenced his labors among the Scotch on Cape Fear, 1756; Hugh McAden, who visited Duplin County, 1755, as a licentiate of Newcastle Presbytery; . . . Henry Patillo, licensed by Hanover Presbytery in 1755, ordained 1758, and accepted a call from Hawfield, 1765; James Creswell. licensed by Hanover Presbytery, 1764, and was ordained pastor of Nutbush, Grassy Creek, and Lower Hico, 1765: David Caldwell, ordained by New Brunswick Presbytery, 1765, pastor of Buffalo and Alamance, 1768; Joseph Alexander, ordained by Hanover Presbytery, March, 1768, as pastor of Sugar Creek, having been received as licentiate from Newcastle Presbytery; Hezekiah James Balch, ordained by the Donegal, and reported to Synod, 1770, pastor of Poplar Tent. These were in connection with Orange Presbytery, which then extended over North and South Carolina, and had in all twelve members, eight in North Carolina and four in South Carolina. To these may be added Mr. James Tate, who was living in Wilmington, but not connected with the Presbytery. The congregations and neighborhoods that required the labors of a Presbyterian minister were more than five times that number.

Thus when Shubal Stearns and his company came to Sandy Creek in 1755 they found on many sides those who offered no promising field for missionary labors. The Scotch Highlanders in Cumberland and the Germans in Randolph and Guilford and along the Yadkin could understand only those who used their own tongues. The Quakers of Cane Creek and New Garden were so well established in the tenets of their own faith that their conversion to another was not to be expected. The Moravians were a closely organized church and well satisfied with their beliefs. The Presbyterians who extended in a ring around the northern and western parts of the settlements had all the conservatism that has always characterized members of the Church of Scotland; they were served occasionally by able ministers, and were open to missionary influence by apostles of other faiths only when left too long without a visit from Presbyterian ministers.

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

But the new influx of immigrants brought settlers of another type, who had already begun to come before Stearns and his company reached Sandy Creek. When the Separate Baptists came they found many of the inhabitants in the section where they settled English and adherents of the Church of England. What is now southern Randolph, Montgomery, Anson, southern and eastern Chatham and southern Orange had settlers predominantly English, with a small admixture of Welsh and Irish.[36]

Nor can I believe that there is any substantial ground for the statement often made that the predominating element in the population of Piedmont North Carolina was for many years Scotch-Irish. Probably this was true for a few years in all the Presbyterian settlements and for a longer period in the territory of the present counties of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus. In all other sections of the Province where the Scotch-Irish were the first settlers they were soon outnumbered by the English. An instance of this was in Rowan County, wherein according to Rev. T. S. Drage, minister of the Parish of St. Luke's at Salisbury, the supporters of the Establishment were five times as numerous as the Presbyterians and all others.[37]

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[36] That the settlers here were adherents of the Church of England is well attested by the accounts given of them in Benedict, *Ibid.*, 38f. The family names show that most of them were of English descent.

In 1755 the religious condition of all the inhabitants of the counties of Orange, Rowan and Anson was deplorable except in the Quaker, German and Presbyterian settlements. Since the time when North Carolina was given up by the Proprietors, little had been done by the Church of England in any part of the Province. On Dobbs' arrival in 1754 there was no minister of the Church of England settled west of Edgecombe County, and there was yet none at his death in 1765. The increasing number of settlers, most of whom, we are told, were adherents of the Church of England, were entirely destitute of religions instruction by ministers of that church except possibly from occasional services by itinerant ministers.

## The Baptists in the Jersey Settlement

Among the settlers of this section was a colony from New Jersey who occupied the lands near the Yadkin south of where the North Carolina Railroad crosses the river.[38] In this settlement were many Baptists who as early as the summer of 1755 had already established worship and had a minister of their own. This minister was first the Rev. Benjamin Miller, pastor of the Scotch Plains Baptist Church in New

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[37] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 506. On the face of it one finds it improbable that one little corner of Ireland, one-sixth the size of North Carolina, should have furnished the greater part of the immigrants to our Province fifty years after the persecution to which they, like all other Dissenters, had been subjected under Charles the Second and James the Second. All will admit that the Scotch-Irish settlers were eminent for intelligence and character. On September 12, 1752, Bishop Spangenburg wrote: "After having traversed the length and breadth of North Carolina, we have ascertained that towards the western mountains there are plenty of people who have come from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and even from New England." *Colonial Records,* IV, 1312. This language does not at all imply any preponderance of Scotch-Irish in these parts.

[38] Sheets, *History of Liberty Baptist Association,* p. 71.

Jersey, who was sent in October of the year 1755 along with P. P. Vanhorn to win the General Baptist churches of North Carolina. When Rev. Hugh McAden reached this settlement on his journey through North Carolina, in September of the year 1755, he found that Mr. Miller had already been there and had worked so effectively that the had caused many of the Presbyterians, who had a meeting house in the settlement, to become Baptists. Just how long Miller had been laboring among them is not known, but it was probably in the year 1754 that he first came, since his name, which is regularly found among the list of delegates of the Philadelphia Association for the years preceding, does not appear in the lists for 1754, nor in those for 1755 and 1756 when we know he was in North Carolina. It seems probable then that in the latter part of 1753 or early in 1754 a considerable portion of Mr. Miller's church, of which he had been pastor since 1747, migrated to North Carolina, and that Mr. Miller came with them to establish their church.[39] The conversion of so many of the Presbyterians among the settlers would imply that he had been laboring among them for many months. On his first visit Mr. McAden seems not to have found Mr. Miller in the "Settlement," but on his return, January 11, 1756, he preached in the "meeting house," "in company with a Mr. Miller, the Baptist minister from New Jersey, of whom as a Christian man he (McAden) speaks favorably."[40] Mr. Miller did not remain long. But already the Charleston Association had become interested in the Jersey Settlement church, and it was through its kindly offices that the next minister, the Rev. John Gano, came to this place. At a meeting of the Association of 1755 Rev. Oliver

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[39] This is the supposition of Elder S. J. Yerkes, of Plainfield, New Jersey, as quoted by Sheets, *op. cit.*, p. 72, "The Scotch Plain (Baptist) Church was organized in 1747. The first pastor was Benjamin Miller, who remained with the church until his death in 1781. During his pastorate the party referred to in your letter must have left New Jersey. Now, supposing they were members of his church, it is not unlikely that he accompanied or followed them for the purpose of organizing them into a church."

[40] Foote, *Sketches*, p. 167.

Hart had been authorized to secure, if possible, a missionary to labor in its bounds. Visiting Philadelphia the same year he secured Rev. John Gano, who attended the next meeting of the Charleston Association, that of 1756. Here he was advised to make a tour of the Yadkin River and to bestow his labors "wherever Providence appeared to direct."[41] Thus he came to the Jersey Settlement. The pastorless church strongly urged him to become their minister. He seems to have given them some encouragement since after his return to his church at Morristown, New Jersey, the Yadkin brethren sent two messengers to induce Gano's church to give him up. At first the Morristown saints utterly refused, but afterwards reconsidered and left Mr. Gano to use his discretion. He decided to go at once. His account is as follows:

> I at length took leave of the church and my friends, and started on a long, expensive and tedious journey; and, through the goodness of God, arrived there in about five weeks, after traveling about eight hundred miles. We met with a favorable reception from the people, and Col. G. Smith[42] received us in his house, where we continued until I built a house. The people met and determined on building a meeting house, which was completed in a few months. As there was no other place of worship near, and there was a great collection of inhabitants of different denominations, they all attended, and it became generally united. In order that all might be concerned upon necessary occasions, we appointed a board of trustees, some of each denomination. They continued to be united while I remained there, which was about two years and a half. Before I left the place, a Baptist church was constituted and many additions made to it. During my residence in this place, we were blest with another son, who was born Nov. 11, 1758. . . . The reason of my leaving this place was the war with the

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[41] These facts are found in a digest of Furman's *History of the Charleston Association* made by W. H. Eller. They are corroborated by the *History of the Philadelphia Association,* which shows that Mr. Gano was present as a delegate in 1754 and 1755, but not thereafter.

[42] Probably the Col. G. Smith named by Mr. Gano was Mr. George Smith who by the Act for creating Supreme Courts passed by the General Assembly of 1754, Act I, was appointed one of the commissioners to receive taxes which they were to apply towards building a jail and office buildings for the court in Salisbury. *Colonial Records,* XXV, 286.

> Cherokee Indians. I had a captain's commission from the governor; but there being no immediate call for my services, and my family being much exposed, I concluded it was expedient to move back to New Jersey. I therefore resigned my commission and left this place, under the protection of a kind Providence, arrived at my father-in-law's, at Elizabeth-Town, with my two children, after being absent two years.[43]

When in the quotation above Mr. Gano says that a Baptist church was constituted, his language must not be taken to imply that a church was not existent there previously. He had himself in his *Memoirs* just above the words quoted spoken of "the church at Yadkin." Mr. Gano's "constitution" was really a reconstitution, with the election of new officers and a complete organization after the new meeting house was built. This church was enrolled in the Charleston Association in the year 1759 and in the minutes of that Association the date of its constitution is given as 1755.[44] Accordingly, it can hardly be doubted that the church was organized by Rev. Benjamin Miller during his stay there in the first months of 1755. This would make it an older church by several months than that at Sandy Creek.

It is worthy of note, however, that this was a Particular Baptist Church, differing from the Separates at Sandy Creek. On this account, their minister, Mr. Gano, "being sent, it seems to inquire into the state of these Newlight Baptists" (Semple), was looked upon with suspicion by the ministers of the Sandy Creek Association, as will be told below in the account of that body, when he visited it at their second session in October, 1759, although he was "received by Stearns with great affection." This church being of like order, joined the Charleston Association, composed of Particular Baptist churches, which, according to Morgan Edwards, carried on this Association "in perfect conformity to that of Philadelphia."[45]

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[43] Quoted by Sheets, *Hist. of Lib. Baptist Asso.*, p. 74f. There is no reference in the *Colonial Records* to Gano's being commissioned captain, probably because he did not see actual service.

[44] MS. Copy of Minutes of the Charleston Association, by Eller.

This church, which had as its first ministers two of the very ablest ministers of the Philadelphia Association, Miller and Gano, and whose members were seemingly of good religious heritage, soon passed out of existence. We have seen that it joined the Charleston Association in 1759, probably at a meeting held at Pee Dee in the spring of that year for the special accommodation of the North Carolina churches. In the following October Gauo attended the session of the Sandy Creek Association. It was soon after this that the war of the Cherokee Indians caused the dispersion of the church. These Indians had already in the summer of 1759 begun to murder the settlers in the outlying plantations along the Catawba, and the inhabitants had begun to take shelter in the forts. But the incursion which drove the settlers in the Jersey Settlement from their homes was that in January and February, 1760, when the Indians attacked Fort Dobbs at Fourth Creek in the present county of Iredell, threatened the Moravian settlements, and advanced as far east as Walnut Cove. Not all the families of the Jersey church left their homes, but their pastor was gone and the church organization was no longer kept up. A portion of those who remained, "the remains of Mr. Gano's church in Jersey Settlement," according to Morgan Edwards, joined with others in the constitution of Shallow Fords Baptist church, a body of Separates, on the borders of Forsyth and Davie County. It was a quarter of a century, in the year 1784, before another Baptist church was established in this place. Sheets thinks that among its constituent members were some who had been members of the early church and their descendants.[46]

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[45] MS. History of South Carolina Baptists, p. 121.

[46] Sheets, *Hist. of Liberty Association,* p. 77. Asplund gives the date of the constitution of the first church as 1758. The names of some of the early families who came from Jersey were, according to Sheets: McCoy, Merrill, McGuire, Smith, Ellis (from which family Governor John W. Ellis traced his descent), March, Hayden, Wiseman, Trantham.

It is to be remarked that while this church of the Jersey Settlement was a great blessing to its members and its community, yet it lacked the missionary zeal of the Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek. Its pastors went on no missionary journeys and established no new congregations of Baptists. But as we shall now see the Separates went everywhere preaching the word.

### The Separates of Sandy Creek

Had the Baptists in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia continued after 1755 to develop along the line of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 and the like Charleston Confession, it is safe to say that the Baptists of the South would not have been the great and numerous denomination they are today. While in so far as they had an educated ministry they would have gained adherents and had a respectable and influential membership, their rigid Calvinism would have kept them from prosecuting missionary labors with success. The history of the Particular Baptists in England and in America sufficiently attests the truth of this statement. After the Baptists in their confession of 1689 had abandoned the free gospel principles of the Confession of 1644 and had written into their Confession of that year much of the Westminster Confession of their Presbyterian brethren, they were no longer an aggressive and progressive body; they no longer increased in numbers; it was not by them but by Whitefield and John Wesley that the English people were to be aroused from their lethargy. Even today long after the English Baptists have been freed from the bonds of a hyper-Calvinism they are relatively a weak body of Christians. Another instance of the unprogressive character of the Particular Baptists, except under the most favorable circumstances and among ministers of sufficient education to avoid the entanglements of a rigid statement of Calvinistic principles, is to be seen in the churches of the Primitive Baptists of North Carolina. For a hundred years they have seen many of their churches dwindle in numbers and finally become extinct, and while the population has increased many fold they have hardly been able to maintain as large a total membership as they had in the year 1835. It is then altogether improbable that the Particular Baptist churches of North Carolina, if left to themselves, would after the year 1755 have been able to evangelize North Carolina. It must be regarded as the special blessing of our Heavenly Father that in 1755 He sent the Separate Baptists to our Province. They and they alone of the Christians of that day had the zeal to proclaim a gospel message that could reach the settlers who in many wide stretches of North Carolina were wholly destitute of religious instruction.

Fully recognizing this, Morgan Edwards, himself a Particular Baptist, when he comes to tell of the beginning of Sandy Creek, feels his Welsh blood stirred within him, and breaks out in strains worthy of an Ossian:

> They began, says he, in this manner. The fall after Braddock's Defeat, Nov. 22, 1755, the following persons came from Opekon in Virginia and settled in the neighborhood of Sandy Creek, viz.: Rev. Shubal Stearns and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Shubal Stearns, Senr. and his wife, Ebenezer Stearns and wife, Enis Stinson and wife, Peter Stearns and wife, Jonathan Polk and wife: the same year they built a little meeting house near the present, where they administered the Lord's Supper. Soon after the neighborhood was alarmed and the Spirit of God listed to blow as a mighty rushing wind in so much that in three years' time they had increased to three churches and upwards of 900 communicants, viz: Sandy Creek, Abbot's Creek, Deep River. The most remarkable events are these: (1) It is a mother church, nay a grandmother and a great grandmother. All the Separate Baptists sprang hence: not only eastward towards the sea, but westward towards the great river Mississippi, but northward to Virginia and southward to South Carolina and Georgia. The word went forth from this Sion, and great was the company of them who published it, in so much that her converts were as drops of morning dew. The first church that sprang hence was Abbot's

Creek, then Deep River, Little River, New River, (Ezekiel Hunter), Southwest (Charles Marklin), Trent (James McDaniel), Staunton River, Virginia, (William Murphy), Fall Creek, Virginia, (Samuel Harris), Dan River, Virginia, (Dutton Lane), Grassy Creek (James Reed), John Waller's Church, Virginia, Amelia, Virginia, (Jeremiah Walker), Fair Forest, South Carolina, (Phil. Mulkey), Congaree, South Carolina, (Joseph Rees), Stephen's Creek, South Carolina, (Dan. Marshall), Shallow Fords, North Carolina, (Joseph Murphy), &c. The ministers, Daniel Marshall, Philip Mulkey, John Newton, Joseph Murphy, William Murphy, Dutton Lane, Ezekiel Hunter, Charles Marklin, James McDaniel, Joseph Rees, James Reed, Samuel Harris, John Waller, Jeremiah Walker, — Ireland, Elijah Creague, Elnathan Davis.

It is much to be regretted that we cannot trace in connected narrative the progress of the work of Stearns and his fellow laborers in which with Sandy Creek as a center they preached the gospel of regeneration, made converts, and established churches from the Potomac and the Chesapeake to beyond the Savannah, and united these churches in one great Association, the Sandy Creek. But North Carolina had no early Baptist historian to collect and compile materials for a history of the denomination. This lack of material for the history of the Separate Baptists in North Carolina was felt by the Baptist historian Benedict as early as 1810. Hence, his account of the work of Stearns and the other early Separate Baptist preachers in North Carolina occupied so little space in his history that for many years the real importance of the Separates was obscured, and even today there are many misconceptions in regard to it. It is under the head of Virginia that Benedict gives his account of the rise of the Separate Baptists and the early work of the Sandy Creek Association. This was not because Benedict did not understand that the work of the Separates had its rise and direction at Sandy Creek, but because Semple, the early historian of the Virginia Baptists, had already written as part of the history of the Virginia Baptists the story of the early progress of the Separates. This account being based on information from primary sources and from contemporaries of the events it tells of truly represents the character of the early labors of the Separate Baptists, although it deals for the most part with their activities in Virginia alone. Semple's account with slight additions was incorporated by Benedict in his history under the head of Virginia and for that reason omitted in his story of the Baptists of our State. But as Benedict saw, Semple's narrative is properly pertinent to the history of the Separates in North Carolina, and is, in fact, a part of the history of the Sandy Creek Association before its division in 1770. As given below the account, except in a few paragraphs which are indicated, is Benedict's rescript of Semple.

The appellation of Separates first began to be given to a set of Pedobaptist reformers, whose evangelical zeal was produced by the instrumentality of the famous George Whitefield, and other eminent itinerant preachers of that day, and who began their extraordinary career about the year 1740. Soon after these reformers, who were first called New-Lights, and afterwards Separates, were organized into distinct societies, they were joined by Shubael Stearns, a native of Boston, Mass., who becoming a preacher, labored among them until 1751, when he embraced the sentiments of the Baptists, as many other Pedobaptist Separates did about this time, and soon after was baptized by Rev. Wait Palmer. Mr. Stearns was ordained the same year in Tolland, Conn., the town in which he was baptized, by the said Wait Palmer and Joshua Morse, the former being pastor of the church in Stonington, and the latter of New London, in Connecticut.

Mr. Stearns and most of the Separates had strong faith in the immediate teachings of the Spirit. They believed that to those who sought him earnestly, God often gave evident tokens of His will. That such indications of the divine pleasure, partaking of the nature of inspiration, were above, though not contrary to reason, and that following these, still leaning in every step upon the same wisdom and power by which they were first actuated, they would inevitably be led to the accomplishment of the two great objects of a Christian life, the glory of God and the salvation of men. Mr. Stearns, listening to some of these instructions of Heaven, as he esteemed them, conceived himself called by the Almighty to move far to the westward, to execute a great and extensive work. Incited by his impressions, in the year 1754, he and a few of his members, took their leave of New England. He halted first at Opeckon, in Berkeley County, Virginia, where he found a Baptist church under the care of the Rev. John Garrard, who received him kindly. Here also he met his brother-in-law, the Rev. Daniel Marshall, who was also a Separate, and of whom much will be said in the history of the southern Baptists, just returned from his mission among the Indians, and who after his arrival at this place had become a Baptist. They joined companies, and settled for a while on Cacapon, in Hampshire County, about thirty miles from Winchester. Here, Stearns not meeting with expected success, felt restless. Some of his friends had moved to North Carolina; he received letters from these, informing him that preaching was greatly desired by the people of that country; that in some instances they rode forty miles to hear one sermon. He and his party once more got under way, and traveling about two hundred miles, came to Sandy Creek in Guilford County, North Carolina. Here he took up his permanent residence. The number of families in Stearn's company was eight, and the number of communicants sixteen, viz., Shubael Stearns and wife, Peter Stearns and wife, Ebenezer Stearns and wife, Shubael Stearns, Junior, and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Enos Stinson and wife, Jonathan Polk and wife.

As soon as they arrived they built them a little meeting house, and these sixteen persons formed themselves into a church and chose Shubael Stearns for their pastor, who had for his assistants at that time Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, neither of whom was ordained.

The inhabitants about this little colony of Baptists, although brought up in the Christian religion, were grossly ignorant of its essential principles. Having the form of godliness they knew nothing of its power. Stearns and his party, of course, brought strange things to their ears. To be born again appeared to them as absurd as it did to the Jewish doctor, when he asked, if he must enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born. Having always supposed that religion consisted in nothing more than the practice of outward duties, they could not comprehend how it should be necessary to feel conviction and conversion; and to be able to ascertain the time and place of one's conversion, was, in their estimation, wonderful indeed. These points were all strenuously contended for by the new preachers. But their manner of preaching was, if possible, much more novel than their doctrines. The Separates in New England had acquired a very warm and pathetic address, accompanied by strong gestures and a singular tone of voice. Being often deeply affected themselves when preaching, correspondent affections were felt by their pious hearers, which were frequently expressed by tears, trembling, screams, and acclamations of grief and joy. All these they brought with them to their new habitation, at which the people were greatly astonished, having never seen things on this wise before. Many mocked, but the power of God was attending them; many also trembled. In the process of time, some of the inhabitants became converts, and bowed obedience to the Redeemer's sceptre. These uniting their labors with others, a powerful and extensive work commenced, and Sandy Creek Church soon swelled from sixteen to six hundred and six members.

Daniel Marshall, though not possessed of great talents, was indefatigable in his labors. He sallied out into the adjacent neighborhoods, and planted the Redeemer's standard in many of the strongholds of Satan. At Abbot's Creek, about thirty miles from Sandy Creek, the gospel prospered so largely, that they petitioned the mother church for a constitution, and for the ordination of Mr. Marshall as their pastor. The church was constituted; Mr. Marshall accepted the call, and went to live among them. His ordination, however, was a matter of some difficulty. It required, upon their principles, a plurality of elders to constitute a presbytery. Mr. Stearns was the only ordained minister among them. In this dilemma they were informed that there were some Regular Baptist preachers living on Pedee river, S. C. To one of these Mr. Stearns applied, and requested him to assist him in the ordination of Mr. Marshall. This request he sternly refused, declaring that he held no fellowship with Stearns's party; that he believed them to be a disorderly set; suffering women to pray in public; and permitting every ignorant man to preach that chose; and that they encouraged noise and confusion in their meetings. Application was then made to Mr. Ledbetter, who was then pastor on Lynch's Creek, Craven County, South Carolina, and who was a brother-in-law of Mr. Marshall. He and Mr. Stearns ordained Mr. Marshall to the care of the new church. The work of grace continued to spread and several preachers were raised in North Carolina. Among them was James Read, who was afterwards very successful in Virginia. When he first began to preach he was very illiterate, not knowing how to read or write. His wife became his instructor, and he soon acquired learning sufficient to enable him to read the Scriptures.

The gospel was carried by Mr. Marshall into the parts of Virginia, adjacent to the residence of this religious colony, soon after their first settlement. He baptized several persons in some of his first visits. Among them was Dutton Lane, who shortly after his baptism began to preach. A revival succeeded, and Mr. Marshall at one time baptized forty-two persons. In August, 1760, a church was constituted, and Mr. Lane became their pastor. This was the first Separate Baptist church in Virginia, and in some sense the mother of all the rest. The church prospered very much under the ministry of Mr. Lane, aided by the occasional visits of Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stearns. They endured much persecution, but God prospered them, and delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies.

Soon after Mr. Lane's conversion, the power of God was effectual in the conversion of Samuel Harris, a man of great distinction in those parts. But upon being honored of God, he laid aside all worldly honors, and became a laborer in the Lord's vineyard. In 1759, he was ordained a ruling elder. From the commencement of his ministry, for about seven years, his labors were devoted to his own and the adjacent counties. Being often with Mr. Marshall in his ministerial journies, he caught the zeal, diligence, and indeed the manners of this zealous evangelist. His labors were crowned with the blessings of heaven wherever he went. Stearns, though not as laborious as Marshall, was not idle. He seems to have possessed the talent of arranging the materials when collected, and well understood discipline and church government.

Mr. Marshall's impressions led him to travel further south. Accordingly, after prosecuting his successful ministry a few years in North Carolina, and the neighboring parts of Virginia, he took an affectionate leave of the church over which he presided, and of his friends in that region, and settled on Beaver Creek in South Carolina, not far from two hundred miles to the northwest of Charleston. Marshall, after tarrying a few years at different places in South Carolina, and having been instrumental in raising up a number of churches, and laying the foundation for many others, in 1771 removed to Georgia, and settled at Kioka Creek, about eighteen miles to the west of Augusta, where a church was soon gathered by his means, as some of his brethren had moved into that place before him. Mr. Marshall was accompanied by a few North Carolina Separates, on his removal from them, and soon was followed by others, among whom were some ministers, particularly Joseph Breed and Philip Mulky, the last of whom was for many years a very famous and successful preacher in South Carolina; and by the labors of those preachers and some others, who were soon raised up in the parts, seven churches were gathered by the year 1770, some of which were very large, and consisted of a number of branches, which were shortly after formed into distinct churches.

While Marshall was sojourning southward, and planting churches in various places where he pitched his frequent habitations, Harris bent his course to the northward, amongst his rude and insolent countrymen, the Virginians; and while his brethren were thus engaged to the north and south of him, Stearns maintained his station at Sandy Creek, where his labors were greatly blessed; he however often traveled a considerable distance in the country around, to assist in organizing and regulating the churches which he and his associates were instrumental in raising up. Thus the Separate Baptists were headed by three most distinguished men; distinguished not for human acquirements, but for purity of life, godly simplicity, which they, amidst the shipwreck of many, maintained to the end; and for a pious ardor and invincible boldness and perseverance in their Master's service. Other preachers were soon raised up under their ministry, whose zealous and abundant labors were crowned with great success; so that the Separates in a few years became truly a great people, and their churches were scattered over a country whose extent from north to south was about five hundred miles; and the Sandy Creek church the mother of them all was not far from the two extremes.

"Very remarkable things," said Morgan Edwards in 1775, "may be said of this church, worthy a place in Gillis' book, and inferior to no instance he gives of the modern success of the gospel in the different parts of the world. It began with sixteen souls, and in a short time increased to six hundred and six, spreading its branches to Deep River and Abbot's Creek, which branches are gone to other provinces, and most of the members of this church have followed them; in so much that in seventeen years it is reduced from six hundred and six to fourteen souls. The cause of this dispersion is the abuse of power which too much prevailed in the province, and caused the inhabitants at last to rise up in arms, and fight for their privileges; but being routed, May 16, 1771, they despaired of seeing better times, and therefore quitted the province. It is said 1,500 families departed since the battle of Alamance, and to my knowledge a great many more are only waiting to dispose of their plantations in order to follow them. This is to me an argument that their grievances were real, and their oppressions great, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary.

"The church at Little River was no less remarkable than the one already mentioned; for this was constituted in 1760, fivc years after the Sandy Creek, and in three years increased from five to five hundred, and built five meeting houses; but this church was also reduced by the provincial troubles and consequent dispersion of the inhabitants mentioned above.

"But to return. Sandy Creek church is the mother of all the Separate Baptists. From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them who published it. This church in seventeen years has spread her branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesapeake Bay; and northward to the waters of the Potomac; it, in seventeen years, is become mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, to forty-two churches, from which sprang 125 ministers, many of which were are ordained, and support the sacred character as well as any set of clergy in America and if some have turned out bad, where is there a set of clergy that can throw the first stone, and say, 'We all are good'? As for the outcries, epilepsies, and ecstasies attending their ministry, they are not peculiar to them; the New England Presbyterians had them long before; and in Virginia, it is well known that the same effects attend the ministry of some clergymen of the Church of England, particularly Rev. Messrs. Derreaux Garrett and Archibald M'Roberts. The enchantment of sounds, attended with corresponding actions, have produced greater effects than these; though I believe a supernatural and invisible hand works in the assemblies of the Separate Baptists, bearing down the human mind, as was the case in the primitive churches. I Cor. xiv. 25."

But Virginia in about ten years after their settlement became to the Separates their principal scene of action, of suffering and success. Their movements here, we shall now proceed to state; being prepared from Semple's History to give a more extensive and circumstantial account of them, in this, than in the other States.

Harris seemed destined of God to labor more extensively in Virginia than in any other State. And having done much good in his own neighborhood, in the year 1765, the time arrived for him to extend his labors. In January of this year Allen Wyley, an inhabitant of Culpeper, and who had been baptized by David Thomas, hearing of the Separate Baptist preachers, traveled as far as Pittsylvania, in order to get one or more of them to come and preach in his own county. He traveled on, scarcely knowing whither he went; but an unseen hand directed his course. He providentially fell in with one of Mr. Harris's meetings. When he came into the meeting house, Mr. Harris fixed his eyes upon him, being impressed previously that he had some extraordinary message. He asked him whence he came, &c. Mr. Wyley told him his errand. Upon which, after some deliberation, believing him to be sent of God, Mr. Harris agreed to go. Taking three days to prepare, he set out with Wyley, having no meetings on the way, yet exhorting and praying at every house where he went.

Arriving in Culpeper, his first meeting was at Wyley's own house. He preached the first day without interruption, and made appointments for the next. But when he began his meeting, such violent opposition was made by a company who appeared with whips, sticks, clubs and other rustic weapons, as to hinder his labors; in consequence of which he went that night over to Orange county, and preached with much effect. He continued for many days preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted or seriously awakened under the ministry of the Regular Baptists, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labors. When Mr. Harris left them he exhorted them to be steadfast, and advised some in whom he discovered talents to commence the exercise of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. In this ministerial journey Mr. Harris sowed much good seed, which yielded afterwards great increase. The young converts took his advice and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco-house for their meeting house. After preaching in this way for some time, they applied to Mr. David Thomas, who lived somewhere north of the Rappahannock, to come and preach for them, and teach them the way of God more perfectly; he came, but in his preaching expressed some disapprobation of the preaching of such weak and illiterate persons. This was like throwing cold water upon their flaming zeal; they took umbrage, and resolved to send once more for Mr. Harris. Some time in the year 1766, and a short time after Mr. Thomas's preaching, three of the party, viz., Elijah Craig and two others, traveled to Mr. Harris's house in order to procure his services in Orange and the adjacent parts, to preach and baptize the new converts. They found to their surprise, that he had not been ordained to the administration of the ordinances. To remedy this inconvenience, he carried them about sixty miles into North Carolina to get James Read, who was ordained.

There is something singular in the exercise of Mr. Read about this time. He was impressed with an opinion that he had frequent teachings from God; and indeed from the account given by himself we must either doubt his veracity or admit that his impressions were supernatural. He declares that respecting his preaching in Virginia, for many weeks, he had no rest in his spirit. Asleep or awake he felt his soul earnestly impressed with strong desires to go to Virginia to preach the gospel. In his dreams he thought that God would often shew him large congregations of Virginians assembled to hear preaching. He was sometimes heard by his family to cry out in his sleep, "O Virginia! Virginia! Virginia!" Mr. Graves, a member of his church, a good man, discovering his anxiety and believing his impressions to be from God, offered to accompany him. Just as they were preparing to set out, Mr. Harris and the three messengers mentioned above came for him to go with them.

The circumstances so much resemble Peter's call from Joppa to Caesarea that we can hardly for a moment hesitate in placing implicit confidence in its being a contrivance of Divine Wisdom.

Mr. Read agreed to go without much hesitation. One of the messengers from Spotsylvania went on to appoint meetings on the way. The two preachers, after filling up some appointments in their own parts, pursued their contemplated journey, accompanied by Mr. Graves and the other two. In about two weeks they arrived in Orange, within the bounds of the Blue Run Church as it now stands. When they came in sight and saw a very large congregation they were greatly affected. After a few minutes of prayer and reflection they recovered their courage and entered upon their great work. They preached with much effect on that day. The next day they preached at Elijah Craig's, where a vast crowd attended. David Thomas and John Garrard, both preachers of the Regular Order, were at this meeting. The ministers on both sides seemed desirous to unite but the people were against it; the larger part siding with the Separates. As they could not unite, the next day being Sabbath, both parties held meetings but a small distance from each other. Baptism was administered by both. These things widened the breach. Messrs. Read and Harris, however, continued their ministrations. Mr. Read baptized nineteen the first day, and more on the days following. They went through Spottsylvania into the upper parts of Caroline, Hanover and Goochland, sowing the seeds of grace and peace in many places. So much were they inspirited by these meetings that they made appointments to come again the next year. In their second visit they were accompanied by the Rev. Dutton Lane, who assisted them in constituting and organizing the first Separate Baptist church between the Rappahannock and the James river. This took place on the 20th of November, 1767. The church was called Upper Spottsylvania, and consisted of twenty-five members, including all the Separate Baptists north of the James river. This was a mother to many other churches.

Read and Harris continued to visit these parts for about three years with wonderful effect. In one of their visits they baptized seventy-five at one time, and in the course of one of their journies, which generally lasted several weeks, they baptized upwards of two hundred. It was not uncommon at their great meetings for many hundreds of men to encamp on the ground in order to be present the next day. The night meetings, through the great work of God, continued very late; the ministers would scarce have an opportunity to sleep. Sometimes the floor would be covered with persons struck down under the conviction of sin. It frequently happened that when they would return to rest at a late hour they would be under the necessity of arising again through the earnest cries of the penitent. There were instances of men traveling more than one hundred miles to one of these meetings; to go forty or fifty was not uncommon.

On account of the great increase of members through the labors of Messrs. Read and Harris, aided by a number of young preachers, it was found necessary to constitute several other churches.

Read and Harris, particularly the latter, were men of great zeal and indefatigable diligence and perseverance in their Master's cause. Their spirit was caught by many of the young prophets in Orange and Spottsylvania. Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs, John Burrus, and others, animated by an ardent desire for the advancement of their Master's kingdom, sallied forth in every direction, spreading the tidings of peace and salvation wherever they went. Most of them illiterate, yet illumined by the wisdom from above, they would defend and maintain the cause of truth against the arguments of the most profound. Without visible sword or buckler, they moved on steady to their purpose, undismayed by the terrific hosts of Satan, which were backed by the strong arm of civil authority. Magistrates and mobs, priests and sheriffs, courts and prisons, all mainly combined to divert them from their object.

Their labors were not confined to their own counties. In Goochland, Messrs. Harris and Read had baptized several, among whom was Reuben Ford, who had professed vital faith seven years before under the ministry of the renowned Whitefield and Davis. Mr. Ford was baptized in the year 1769 by James Read.

These plants were watered by the labors of the Spottsylvania preachers, particularly J. Waller, who early in his visits to Goochland baptized William Webber and Joseph Anthony, who with Reuben Ford had been exhorting, &c, previous to their being baptized. By the united labors of these several servants of God, the work of godliness progressed in Goochland and round about. These young preachers were no sooner captivated by the King of Zion than they immediately began to fight under his banner. Their success was equal to their diligence; many believed and were baptized in Goochland; insomuch that they thought themselves ripe for an independent government, and were accordingly constituted as a church towards the last of the year 1771, which received the name of the county in which was situated, and contained about seventy-five members. This was the mother church of those parts, for from it have been since constituted several others, particularly Dover and Licking Hole. William Webber became pastor of Dover church, which office he held until his death in 1808. Reuben Ford administered the word and ordinances to Goochland and Licking Hole.

One William Mullin, afterwards an useful preacher, had moved from Middlesex and settled in the county of Amelia. When the gospel reached his neighborhood, Mr. Mullin cordially embraced it. Going afterwards, in 1769, on a visit to his relations in Middlesex and Essex, by arguments drawn from the scripture he convinced his brother John and his brother-in-law, James Greenwood, with several others, of the necessity of being born again. Of these some found peace in believing before they ever heard the gospel publicly preached. November, 1770, John Waller and John Burrus came down and preached in Middlesex. They continued preaching at or near the same place for three days; great crowds came out. Waller baptized five; but persecution began to rage. Some said they were deceivers; others that they were good men. On the second day a magistrate attempted to pull Waller off the stage, but the clergyman of the parish prevented it. The next day a man threw a stone at Waller while he was preaching; but the stone missed him and struck a friend of the man who threw it. James Greenwood and others now began to hold public meetings by day and by night; much good was done by them. Many believed and only waited an opportunity to be baptized, there being no ordained preacher nearer than Spottsylvania.

In the meantime the laborers had not been idle in that part of the vineyard south of James river. The two Murpheys, viz. William and Joseph, aided by the indefatigable Samuel Harris, had carried the gospel into some of the counties above Pittsylvania, where Robert Stockton and some other preachers were raised up. Mr. Harris, James Read, Jeremiah Walker, and others had proclaimed the tidings of peace in Halifax, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Amelia and almost all the counties to the west of Richmond, on the south side of James river. In these gatherings there were many useful and several eminent ministers of the gospel brought in, particularly John Williams, John King, James Shelburne, Henry Lester with some others. The gospel was first carried to these places much in the same way as it was carried into Culpeper and Spottsylvania, viz. in consequence of a special message to the preachers from some of the inhabitants. They constituted the first church in 1769, with about forty members, which was called Nottoway. Jeremiah Walker soon moved and took the pastoral care of it; he had been preaching some time before this in North Carolina, his native State; but now moving to Virginia he for several years acted a conspicuous part in the concerns of the Virginia Baptists.

In the year 1758, three years after Stearns and his company settled at Sandy Creek, a few churches having been constituted, and these having a number of branches which were fast maturing for churches, Stearns conceived that an Association composed of delegates from them all would have a tendency to forward the great object of their exertions. For this purpose he visited each church and congregation, and explaining to them his contemplated plan, induced them all to send delegates to his meeting house in January, 1758, when an Association was formed, which was called Sandy Creek and which continues to the present time; but it has experienced many vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity; and at one time, on account of exercising too much control over the churches, it became much embarrassed in its movements and very near to extinction.

For twelve years all the Separate Baptists in Virginia and the two Carolinas continued in connection with this Association, which were generally held at no great distance from the place where it originated. All who could traveled from its remote extremities to attend its yearly sessions, which were conducted with great harmony, and afforded sufficient edification to induce them to undertake with cheerfulness these long and laborious journeys. By the means of these meetings, the gospel was carried into many new places, where the fame of the Baptists had previously spread; for great crowds attending from distant parts, mostly through curiosity, many became enamoured with these extraordinary people, and petitioned the Association to send preachers into their neighborhoods. These petitions were readily granted, and the preachers as readily complied with the appointments. These people were so much engaged in their evangelical pursuits that they had no time to spend in theological debates, nor were they very scrupulous about the mode of conducting their meetings. When assembled their chief employment was preaching, exhortation, singing, and conversing about their various exertions in the Redeemer's service, the success which had attended them, and the new and prosperous scenes which were opening before them. These things so inflamed the hearts of the ministers that they would leave the Association with a zeal and courage which no common obstacles could impede.

"At our first Association," says the MS. of James Read, who was present, "we continued together three of four days. Great crowds of people attended, mostly through curiosity. The great power of God was among us. The preaching every day seemed to be attended with God's blessing. We carried on our Association with sweet decorum and fellowship to the end. Then we took leave of one another, with many solemn charges from our reverend old father Shubael Stearns to stand fast unto the end."

At their next Association they were visited by Rev. John Gano, who at that time resided in North Carolina at a place called the Jersey settlements. Mr. Gano was received by Stearns with great affection; but as there was at that time an unhappy shyness and jealousy between the Regulars and Separates, by the others he was treated with coldness and suspicion; and they even refused to invite him into their Association. But Mr. Gano had too much knowledge of mankind, humility and good nature, to be offended by this treatment. He continued a while as a spectator of their proceedings, and then retired with a view of returning home. Stearns was very much hurt and mortified with the shyness and incivility of his brethren, and in the absence of Mr. Gano expostulated with them on the matter, and made a proposition to invite him to preach to them. All were forward to invite him to preach, although they could not invite him to a seat in their Assembly. With their invitation he cheerfully complied, and his preaching though not with the New Light tones and gestures, was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He continued with them to the close of their session, and preached frequently, much to their astonishment as well as edification. Their hearts were soon opened towards him, and their cold indifference and languid charity were before he left them enlarged into a warm attachment and cordial affection. And so superior did his preaching talents appear to them that the young and illiterate preachers said they felt as if they could never attempt to preach again.

So far Benedict. The story of the Sandy Creek Association will be resumed after I have traced the activities of the Separates in the Carolinas.

## XII

# THE SPREAD OF THE SEPARATE BAPTISTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

In the following account I shall refer the reader to Benedict's rescript of Semple given above, when nothing more is known of the topic under discussion than is contained therein, although it will sometimes be necessary for me to repeat some statements that my narrative may be continuous and not obscure. When additional information not contained in Benedict's account has come into my hands it has been necessary to modify or enlarge his statement so as to give a true representation.

Of the rise of the Separate Baptists, the conversion of Shubal Stearns, and the events of his life before he came to North Carolina, hardly more is known than is contained in the foregoing accounts by Benedict and Morgan Edwards.

When Stearns and his fellow Separate Baptists settled on Sandy Creek they were not long idle. As we have seen they built a little meeting house, doubtless a rude wooden structure, which was abandoned when in 1762 a larger and better house, thirty feet by twenty-six, was built near at hand on the land of Seamore York. But though few here they worshiped in the peace of the wilderness, with one purpose, with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and filled with his Spirt, forming those plans which Shubal Stearns, Joseph Breed, Daniel Marshall and their followers were to pursue in speaking the word with boldness in the regions north, south, east and west.

All things go to show that the real leader of this group, its chief, its teacher, its wise master-builder, was Stearns. Like Paul he had had a vision and been told of the Lord that he would send him far hence from his home. In prosecution of this mission, which he believed had come to him by the direct appointment of his Lord, he assembled his company of disciples, most of them his own kindred, and took up his journey to the westward and southward. Not finding the success that his impressions of the importance of his mission led him to expect in his first stations in Virginia, he journeyed on to North Carolina and found his fixed abode on Sandy Creek, probably on the road that led from the Moravian settlements to the Cape Fear, near the center of the territory whose peoples he was to evangelize. Here he remained for thirteen years until his death, November 20, 1771, sending forth his fellow ministers to preach, organizing churches, ordaining their ministers, and with a proper discipline seeing that all those gathered into churches were taught in all things that the Lord had commanded. Of him Semple says: "He seems to have possessed the talent of arranging the materials when collected. He understood well discipline and church governments."[1] His father was also named Shubal Stearns; his mother was Rebecca Larriford. He was born in Boston, January 28, 1706, thus being when he reached Sandy Creek, nearly fifty years old. The following account of his personal appearance and his peculiar qualities as a preacher are taken from Morgan Edwards' "Materials," etc.:

> Mr. Stearns was but a little man, but of good natural parts, and sound judgment. Of learning he had but a small share, yet was pretty well acquainted with books. His voice was musical and strong, which he managed in such a manner, as one while to make soft impressions on the heart, and fetch tears from the eyes in a

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[1] Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, p. 6.

mechanical way; and anon to shake the nerves, and to throw the animal system into tumults and perturbations. All the Separate ministers copy after him in tones of voice and actions of body; and some few exceed him. His character was indisputably good, both as a man, a Christian, and a preacher. In his eyes was something very penetrating, which seemed to have a meaning in every glance, of which I will give one example; and the rather because it was given me by a man of good sense, I mean Tidence Lane.

"When the fame of Mr. Stearns' preaching (said Mr. Lane) had reached the Yadkin, where I lived, I felt a curiosity to go and hear him. Upon my arrival, I saw a venerable old man sitting under a peach tree with a book in his hand, and the people gathering about him. He fixed his eyes upon me immediately, which made me feel in such a manner as I had never felt before. I turned to quit the place, but could not proceed far. I walked about, sometimes catching his eyes as I walked. My uneasiness increased and became intolerable. I went up to him, thinking that a salutation and shaking hands would relieve me; but it happened otherwise. I began to think that he had an evil eye, and ought to be shunned; but shunning I could no more effect, than a bird can shun the rattlesnake when it fixes its eyes upon it. When he began to preach, my perturbations increased, so that nature could no longer support them, and I sunk to the ground."

(A similar account is found in Edwards' sketch of Rev. Elnathan Davis who, like Mr. Lane, was a man of sense and reputation and afterwards became a distinguished minister.)

Elnathan Davis had heard that one John Steward was to be baptized such a day by Mr. Stearns. Now, this Mr. Steward being a very big man, and Stearns of small stature, he concluded there would be some diversion if not drowning; therefore he gathered about eight or ten of his companions in wickedness and went to the spot. Shubal Stearns came and began to preach. Elnathan went to hear him, while his companions stood at a distance. He was no sooner among the crowd but he perceived some of the people tremble, as if in a fit of the ague; he felt and examined them, in order to find if it were not a dissimulation; meanwhile one man leaned on his shoulder, weeping bitterly; Elnathan, perceiving he had wet his new white coat, pushed him off and ran to his companions, who were sitting on a log at a distance. When he came, one said, "Well, Elnathan, what do you think now of these damned people?" He replied, "There is a trembling and crying spirit among them; but whether it be the Spirit of God or the devil, I don't know; if it be of the devil, the devil go with them, for I will never more venture myself among them." He stood a while in this resolution; but the enchantment of Stearns' voice drew him to the crowd once more. He had not been long there before the trembling seized him also; he attempted to withdraw; but his strength failing and his understanding (being) confounded, he, with many others, sunk to the ground. When he came to himself, he found nothing in him but dread and anxiety, bordering on horror. He continued in this situation some days, and then found relief by faith in Christ. Immediately he began to preach conversion work, raw as he was, and scanty as his knowledge must have been. (He was later pastor at Haw River and still later in the Saluda Association of South Carolina.)

It was Stearns who conceived the idea of founding the Sandy Creek Association and who was its ruling spirit so long as he lived. He visited the various churches and explained his plan to them. Beginning with the year 1758 his home at Sandy Creek was regarded as the Associational center and for a dozen years the sessions of the Association were either with this church or with some other in the same section. The younger preachers from Virginia and the Carolinas found no roads too long and tedious to prevent their being present at these meetings. They were constant attendants and, we are told, derived much knowledge and consolation from the conversation of the more experienced. Their object of special reverence was the "Reverend old father Shubal Stearns."[2]

It was said that he wrote the church covenant which was common among the Separate churches of the time, a complete copy of which is to be found in Devin's *History of the Grassy Creek Church*, and is a very respectable document.

As we go on with our account we shall find many instances of his activity which will serve better to interpret his character and influence.

It was reported to Mr. Stearns while he was still in Virginia that the people of North Carolina were eager for the gospel and would ride many miles to hear a sermon.[3]

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 44f.

[3] "But then his soul was red with zeal to carry light into these dark parts; and in August, 1754, he and others set out for that purpose, and

But when he had come they found in his manner, gestures, tone of voice, and earnestness, that which they had never seen or heard before. The report of these things was noised abroad and a spirit of alarm ran through the people. They assembled in throngs to hear him, some from curiosity, some to mock, some with more serious purposes. Of those who joined the congregation and came in the sound of the preacher's voice, few escaped the spiritual influences that pervaded the meeting. They trembled, they cried aloud for mercy, they found their strength to fail and fell upon the ground in collapse. A spirit like that of Pentecost was among the Christians. It seems that nearly every member of the little church, men and women, preached or exhorted or prayed. Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, though not ordained as pastors of Baptist churches, were already preachers, Mr. Marshall having spent several years as a Presbyterian missionary among the Indians. Marshall's wife, Martha Stearns, a sister of Shubal, was hardly less powerful in these meetings than her famous brother. Of her we are told that, "Without the shadow of an usurped authority over the other sex, Mrs. Marshall, being a lady of good sense, singular piety, and surprising elocution, has, in countless instances melted a whole concourse into tears by her prayers and exhortations."[4]

Many of the new converts would immediately join in the work of exhortation. Especially did the younger among them with an enthusiasm that was not to be restrained tell of what the Lord had done for them.[5] "So mightily grew

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some of them got into North Carolina before him; and he wrote to Connecticut from the south part of Virginia, that they informed him from Carolina. 'That the work of God was great in preaching to an ignorant people, who had little or no preaching for a hundred miles, and no established meeting. But now the people were so eager to hear, that they would come forty miles each way, when they could have opportunity to hear a sermon.' This was dated June 13, 1755." Backus, *Abridgment,* chapter xiv.

[4] Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* p. 375. This paragraph is largely based on Semple's narrative, on pages 3ff. of his work.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

the work of God," says Edwards, "that the Sandy Creek church soon swelled to 606 members." Many of these doubtless were in neighborhoods remote from the parent church, where they were at first occasionally and later regularly ministered to by Stearns or some of his assistants.

It was not many months, however, before some of these groups of converts began to ask to be constituted into distinct churches. The first to be so established was Abbott's Creek, at the place where the church of that name now stands in the present county of Davidson. The events that led to the constitution of this church are characteristic and reveal one of the most important causes of the rapidity with which Separate Baptist churches sprang up all over North Carolina.

There were many groups of people who adhered to Baptist principles, and in some instances a number who had before belonged to the same Baptist church, here and there throughout North Carolina. We know that this was true of the church in question, that at Abbott's Creek; and of the church at Lockwood's Folly, of that at New River, and that on the Neuse. Being without a minister, some pious man or woman yearning for salvation for himself and family and neighbors, after hearing of the work of grace at Sandy Creek would either come himself or send a messenger begging that a preacher be sent among them. We have seen above how the number of these petitions was increased after the sessions of the Association began to attract those from great distances, and how ready the preachers were to respond, however distant the petitioning group. The Separate messengers of the cross went and preached and made converts and baptized.

In the Abbott's Creek community, even before the coming of the Separate Baptists, there was a Welsh Baptist preacher who had come by way of the Welsh Neck settlement in South Carolina. His name was James Younger. For us he is little more than a name. But he left a family, among them a daughter Anna, who married James Evans, and died in 1843 at the extreme old age of ninety-seven years, having long served her community as midwife. Younger seems to have been a man of humble native endowments and little education, and yet able by his pious life and earnest exhortations to make his neighbors realize the claims of God and religion in their lives. That he was not an ordained minister is shown by the fact that his aid was not sought in the ordination of Daniel Marshall as pastor of the Abbott's Creek church a few years later.[6] Though he was not able to preach himself, like Andrew he sought and found one who was abler than he. The fame of the Separates of Sandy Creek had reached his ears, and thither he went. On his return he brought with him that indefatigable missionary pioneer, Daniel Marshall. As a result of the labors of this earnest and fervent evangelist, in which he doubtless had the assistance of his saintly and gifted wife, Mrs. Martha Stearns Marshall, great numbers turned to the Lord. Possibly Stearns himself came and assisted in the work; certainly it was he who as the only ordained minister baptized the new converts. At first, in accordance with the plan of organization which was followed by the Separates as well as by the General and the Particular Baptists, the group at Abbott's Creek became a branch of the parent church at Sandy Creek. But soon, probably as we shall see below as early as 1756, it was found desirable that Abbott's Creek be constituted a distinct church. But now a new difficulty arose. For pastor they needed an ordained minister and there was none among them and none among the Separates except Stearns. For the ordination of a pastor a presbytery consisting of at least two ordained ministers was, according to the rules of the Separates, required. We have seen above how Stearns had gone to South Carolina and after being rebuffed by one Particular Baptist preacher had secured the help of Rev. Henry Ledbetter and how they ordained their common brother-in-law, Daniel Marshall, to the pastorate of the new church.

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[6] Such information as we have about Younger comes from Sheets' *History of the Liberty Association,* p. 81f. He says: "At what time he came there or whatever became of him, will most likely remain an inexplicable mystery."

The fact that Stearns had to seek in South Carolina for a minister to help him in the ordination of Mr. Marshall enables us to fix the date of the constitution of the Abbott's Creek church. It must have been while the church at the Jersey Settlement was yet without a pastor, that is, before the Rev. John Gano had taken up his work there, which was not later than 1757. If Gano had been there when Stearns was seeking ministerial help for the ordination of Marshall he would doubtless have turned to him, and in all probability would not have been rebuffed, for Gano was only too ready to court Baptists of other names. All things go to show that nothing like this occurred. On his visit to the Association in 1759 Gano was most affectionately welcomed by Stearns. This is inconsistent with any previous ill will between them. Accordingly, it seems certain that the Abbott's Creek church had already been constituted and secured a pastor on the arrival of Gano at the Jersey Settlements in 1757.

While this church was to the west of Sandy Creek, the next to be established was to the southeast at a place called Deep River. Its exact location is not known; it was, of course, near the stream from which it takes its name and probably near the ford of that river on the "Yadkin Road," which led from the Cape Fear region by way of the junction of the Deep and Haw rivers, thence by way of the Uwharrie and Abbott's Creek and the ferry of the Yadkin to Salisbury.[7] It is not certain just where this road crossed the river, but it was low down on that stream, most probably near the site of the present town of Cumnock but possibly at the falls at Lockville. At any rate it had among its members several who afterwards helped to form the Haw River church near the present town of Bynum, as we shall see in the course of this narrative.

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[7] In January, 1756, the Rev. Hugh McAden preached to a small company, mostly Highlanders, at Alexander McKay's, who lived thirty miles north of Little River "on the Yadkin road." Down the river, thirty miles

Which of the Separates of Sandy Creek first preached in this vicinity and gathered the church is not known, but the interest which Stearns later took in the new church would suggest that it was he himself. It was organized as a distinct church in October, 1757, with Philip Mulky as pastor. He was the first and only pastor. He was born near Halifax in North Carolina on May 14, 1732, and was bred a Churchman. After a wonderful conversion, narrated in the note below, he embraced the principles of the Baptists and was baptized by Stearns at Sandy Creek on Christmas Day, 1756. In February, 1757, while in the church at Sandy Creek he was called to the ministry and in the following October was ordained by Stearns as pastor of the Deep River church. He continued in this function until 1760, when the church was broken up by the removal of the pastor and the greater part of its members, one group going to South Carolina and another to what is now Montgomery County in this State.[8]

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below, he found a congregation made up largely of Baptists and Quakers. Foote, *Sketches*, p. 171. It seems to have been this same Yadkin road that was traveled in 1755 by Governor Dobbs on his journey from the Cape Fear region to Salisbury. *Colonial Records*, V, 354f.

[8] This account is based upon Morgan Edwards' manuscript history of the South Carolina Baptists, who, under the head of Fairforest Church, gives a sketch of Philip Mulky with the following account of his conversion: "Mr. Mulky's conversion was in this manner. One night as he went out of a house where he had been playing the fiddle at a dancing frolic he saw (as he thought) the Devil grinning at him with fiery eyes; upon which he swooned away. When he came to himself he was in the greatest terror thinking the Devil would be permitted to take him bodily by way of example to the company he had been with. However, he mounted his horse and as he rid home he fancied that the trees struck at him, and the stars frowned at it. In this terror he continued about three weeks, reforming but not able to sleep much and wasting in flesh and strength. After this he was tempted to believe that he never could be saved until

The colony composing the organized church which left Deep River for South Carolina included Philip Mulky, the pastor of the church, and his wife, Obadiah Howard and wife, Benjamin Gist and wife, Charles and Thomas Thompson, and Rachel Collins. They first found a home on the Little River which is a tributary of the Broad and there in August, 1760, established a church with Mulky as their pastor. Here they continued for two years at the end of which time their church had increased to one hundred members. But they were not content. Impelled by the same pioneer and missionary spirit that had caused their first migration the little company again moved further into the wilderness a distance of a hundred miles and here on December 13, 1762, were incorporated into a church, Fair Forest, which became a mother church with branches widely extended all over that section. Here most of them found their permanent earthly home. A fuller account of their growth will be found below.

Early in the year 1760 another colony went off from this same Deep River Church. This was composed of Joseph Murphy and wife, John Lee and wife, William Searsy and wife, Richard Curtis and Susan Carr. Before their departure they were constituted into a church and Joseph Murphy ordained their minister. This Joseph Murphy and his brother William had come to this section from Spotsylvania County, Virginia, where Joseph was born on April 1, 1734, and his brother William two years earlier. Both were converted and became members of the Deep River church in 1757, being baptized by Elder Shubal Stearns. Both became preachers, but William who returned to Virginia did

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he had been faithful to his old master, the Devil, for hitherto he had been faithful to neither; and he began to serve the Devil faithfully. Meantime a stranger came to his house whose name is John Newton (now a minister), and read Isaiah 33d Chapter, three verses, which put him in the mind of seeking salvation. Newton goes away . . . he follows afar off from an apprehension that as soon as he lost sight of him fire would come as when Lot left Sodom.

a more extensive work. They were known as the "Murphy Boys." In the ordination of Joseph as the pastor of the little traveling church the venerable old father Shubal Stearns himself had a part, and it was probably under his direction that the little group were going forth to make their home and establish a church on Little River in what was then in the limits of Anson County, but in that part of it which in 1777 was erected into the county of Montgomery.

This brings us to the constitution of that famous church. There was already a congregation, probably a branch of the Sandy Creek Church, worshiping here. As early as 1758 they had built a meeting house on land given for the purpose by Thomas Ward. In this when the little band from Deep River arrived two years later they at once found a home as a regularly constituted church. They doubtless soon gathered unto themselves all who had been converted and baptized by the preachers from Sandy Creek and any others of the Baptist faith who were in the neighborhood. They extended their labors through all that region both north and south of Rocky River so that in three years' time the home church had increased to five hundred members, and in ten years they had four branches, one near; one at Rocky River; another at Jones's Creek and another on Mountain Creek, at each of which places a meeting house was erected. Before the end of this period many of the members disheartened by the oppression of the officers set over them by Governor Tryon, and, after the battle of Alamance, despairing of the redress of their wrongs of which they had complained, left their homes and the jurisdiction of Governor Tryon and sought refuge in other Provinces. In 1772 Morgan Edwards found the church reduced to a membership of forty-eight. He tells us that "the vile Edmund Fanning" charged Joseph Murphy, their former pastor with leading in the Regulator movement, but Edwards insists that the charge was false. In this Edwards is probably correct for there seems to be no doubt that Stearns did all in his power to keep the members of the churches in the Sandy Creek Association out of the Regulator movement. As we shall see below, in this effort he was altogether unsuccessful so far as related to the lay membership of the churches, but the preachers were probably more directly under his influence. At any rate the statement of Morgan Edwards with reference to the membership of the Little River church shows that they were almost a unit in supporting the Regulator movement. It is probable that it was because their pastor, Mr. Murphy, did not coöperate with them in this that he left them in 1769 and went to another field of labor in Surry County. After his departure the Little River church had no ordained pastor, but two preachers, John Bollin and Edmund Lilly, remained to assist in their worship.

Another church which had among its constituent members a portion of the membership of the Deep River church was that at Haw River which was located on the south bank of that stream near the present town of Bynum. It was constituted on the last Saturday in October in the year 1764. When so many of the Deep River members were leaving their homes those whose names follow remained: Nathaniel Powell, Conrad Dowd and wife, Isaac Brooks and wife, Mary Brooks, Sharper and Cato (Negroes), Wm. Hodge, James Steward, Simon Poe, Robert Calleh, Samuel Mash, now spelled Marsh), the last four of whom had been baptized by Stearns. Its first minister was the Rev. Elnathan Davis, an account of whose conversion is found above in connection with the sketch of Elder Shubal Stearns. He was born in Maryland, November 9, 1735, spent his youth on the James River, and came to North Carolina in 1757. He was baptized by Stearns in May, 1764, and called to the ministry of the church at Haw River at its constitution the same year, though he does not seem to have been formally ordained until November 13, 1770. In this position he remained until 1798, a period of thirty-four years. He then went to South Carolina and spent the remainder of his life as a pastor in the Saluda Association, where he was still living in 1813, and was "esteemed a father of churches, having been a successful preacher of the gospel about fifty years."[9]

In the next year after its constitution Elder Shubal Stearns held a meeting with the Haw River church, preaching for six days, of which he gives the following account in a letter to friends in Connecticut dated October 16, 1765:

> The Lord carries on his work gloriously in sundry places in this province, and in Virginia and in South Carolina. There has been no addition of churches since I wrote last year but many members have been added in many places. Not long since I attended a meeting in Hoy (Haw) river, about thirty miles from hence. About seven hundred souls attended the meeting, which held six days. We received twenty-four persons by a satisfactory declaration of grace, and eighteen of them were baptized. The power of the Lord was wonderful.[10]

Through the agency of this church the Baptists assisted no doubt by the labors of Stearns occupied nearly all the territory of Chatham County south and west of the Haw River except that which was settled by Quakers. Before 1772 this church had branches at Deep River; Rocky River, which was located probably near the site of the present church of that name; Tick Creek, located a few miles east of the present town of Ore Hill; Collins Mount of the north side of Haw River; and Caraway Creek in Guilford County. At each of these places was a meeting house and one or more brethren who served as assistants to the pastor. These were: for Deep River, Nathaniel Powell who served as delegate to the Association and seems to have been a man of prominence; for Rocky River, Drury Sims and George Williams; for Collins Mount, Thomas Brown; for Caraway Creek, John Robins; for Haw River, James Steward. Some of these branches were later to develop into distinct churches, while others continued under other names; that at Caraway Creek became extinct. In 1772 the parent church after losing great numbers by the migrations which followed the Regulator War still had one hundred and ninety-eight members. A further account of the Regulator movement as it affected this church and its branches will be given below.

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[9] Benedict, *History of the Baptists,* II, 160.

[10] This letter is found in Backus, *Abridgment,* chapter xiv.

The nature of the revival services if not of Stearns himself yet certainly of those who labored with him and their successors has been told by Devin.[11] When the preacher had finished his sermon he would come down from the pulpit and while he and the brethren were singing an appropriate hymn he would go around among them shaking hands. After the singing of the hymn he "would extend an invitation to such persons as felt themselves to be poor, guilty sinners and were anxiously inquiring the way of salvation to come forward and kneel near the stand, or if they preferred to do so they could kneel at their seats, proffering to unite with them in prayer for their conversion. After prayer, singing and exhortation, prolonged according to circumstances, the congregation would be dismissed to meet again at night at the meeting house or at some private residence. . . . In these night meetings there would occasionally be preaching, but generally they were only for prayer, praise and exhortation, and direct personal conversation with those who might be concerned about their soul's salvation. In seasons of religious awakening large crowds would attend these meetings, which were blessed in the conversion of many souls. It was not uncommon for the brethren and especially the sisters to give expression to their feelings in outbursts of joy and praise, but it appears that they were free from those wild and fantastic exercises which prevailed in many other places." The anxious seat, or mourners' bench, did not come into use among the Separates for more than fifty years.

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[11] *History of the Grassy Creek Church*, p. 68f.

Another church constituted in this same region was that of Shallow Ford which was near the ford of that name on the Yadkin River near the southern limit of the present county of Forsyth, but probably on the western bank of the river in what was then Surry County, but now Yadkin. According to Morgan Edwards, this church was established through the labors of Elder Joseph Murphy, who, as we have seen, had been the pastor of the church of Little River. He preached in this vicinity and baptized several. These joining with others who had been members of Mr. Gano's church at the Jersey Settlements and possibly with some from other churches were to the number of 32 in 1769 constituted into a church by Elder Joseph Murphy, who became their pastor. They built a house the same year, thirty feet by twenty-six. Like the former church of Mr. Murphy, this church also showed much proselyting zeal and in three years time had increased in numbers to one hundred and eighty-five members, and had established two branches, one in the Forks of the Yadkin and another in what was known as the Mulberry Fields, "near the Moravian settlement," in the service of which Mr. Murphy had three assistants, Messrs. David Allen, John Cates and David Chapman.

Grassy Creek in northern Granville was among the earliest churches constituted by the Separates in North Carolina. We have seen that the Rev. Hugh McAden found a Baptist meeting house here in August, 1755, and preached to a large congregation. If this congregation had any organization it was on the General Baptist plan, perhaps as an arm of the church at Upper Fishing Creek. In the same year the Separates came to Sandy Creek. Among the first places visited by the enterprising Daniel Marshall was Grassy Creek; the exact date is unknown, but it was some time in 1756, and before Marshall had been ordained.[12] Preaching with his usual zeal and fervor he made many converts. Shubal Stearns, who as the only ordained minister among the Separates was competent for the service, came, possibly not before the next year, and baptized them. At the same time, exemplifying his constructive ability, for which Semple praises him, he effected an organization among them, doubtless gathering with those recently converted and baptized such other Baptists as were in the neighborhood. These had been for the most part General Baptists, seemingly relatively numerous and respectable, since they had built a good house of worship. For five or six years this was an arm of the church at Sandy Creek, but in 1762 it was constituted into an independent church.[13] Its first pastor was Elder James Read. He was among the first converts of Marshall's preaching at this place, and was baptized by Stearns himself. Though illiterate he had considerable gifts. Immediately after his conversion he began to exhort the people to flee from the wrath to come. With the assistance of his wife he learned to read and write. Though he was very active in preaching before that time he was, in accord with the usage of the Separates, probably ordained only on the constitution of the church in 1762. This church he served as pastor, except for the two years 1770-72, until 1779, and died in 1798.

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[12] Since the converts of this first meeting were baptized by Stearns, I take it that Marshall had not yet been ordained. Devin, *History of Grassy Creek Church,* says that Marshall was "without question here in a preaching tour in 1756."

[13] Asplund, *Register,* 1793. Devin supposed that the church was constituted in 1757 or 1758, since James Read attended the first meeting of the Sandy Creek Association in 1758 as a delegate from this body. Devin also speaks circumstantially of the visit of Stearns to the Grassy Creek in 1757, at which time "he explained to the brethren his plan of forming an Association. He showed them its necessity for extending the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and urged the importance of sending messengers to Sandy Creek meeting house in January, 1758, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Association. The delegates were appointed according to his request, and the Association was organized at the time designated." This statement of Devin is not based on any contemporary record of the matter but seems to be a deduction from Semple's account of Stearns' activity in organizing the Association, and from the fact that Read was present at its first meeting. It is probable that Stearns did visit the Grassy Creek saints on the mission indicated, for as an arm of the Sandy Creek Church it was under his pastoral care, but it certainly did not become an independent church until an approved person was found to ordain as its pastor. The date 1762 goes back to Asplund, and was accepted by Benedict.

An account of Mr. Read's work in Virginia may be found in the chapter from Semple given above. I am quoting here the sketch of his life found in the same author:

> So much has already been said of Mr. Read (so Semple spells the name) in our account of the first rise of the Baptists in Spotsylvania, &c., that we may now be shorter. He was born (probably in Edgecombe County, N. C.) about the year 1725 or 1726. His father lived from the time Mr. Read was about seven years old on the Shenandoah river. He had early and awful alarms about eternal things, when nothing more than a boy. He says, that when bound an apprentice he would often call upon God, on particular emergencies; and that he often had the most manifest answers to his prayers. Once, he states, that having permission from his master to go and see his parents, he came to a creek so much swelled that he could not pass. Being much distressed he fell upon his knees and prayed to God to help him over. After a little time a horse that was feeding near at hand actually came to where he was; believing him to be sent by Providence he mounted him without saddle or bridle. He carried him over; and then dismounting, the horse immediately returned. These answers of prayer increased his religious impressions, so that to many he seemed to be running into melancholy.
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> It was not until he had become a man of family, and had in a great measure shaken off his serious thoughts, that he met with the New Lights as they were called in North Carolina, to which place he had moved about the same time that Stearns and his party came. Under Mr. Marshall's preaching he was wrought upon according to the gospel plan. After some struggles he finally became a Baptist, probably as early as 1756 or 1757. When he first professed he could neither read nor write. He immediately began to learn, his wife being his instructor. Of his subsequent labors and usefulness, and also his downfall, see account, page 9, &c. After his excommunication in Spotsylvania, he went on home, called Grassy Creek church together, of which he was a member, made

a confession of his guilt and professed repentance; a majority were willing to excuse him, but doing everything by unanimity they called for helps. Not giving satisfaction his excommunication was confirmed. This took place November 21, 1770. He made no attempt for restoration until the next July, when he was rejected, the church not thinking his repentance evangelical. His next attempt was in July, 1772; he was again rejected, and for the same reason. On the 7th of September, the church calling for helps, he was restored to membership, and in November he was restored to the free exercise of the ministry. We have detailed the particulars more at large, because Mr. Read was certainly a distinguished preacher in the first rise of religion, and likewise to show how cautiously they acted in those days. (This account is taken from the Grassy Creek church book.)

He was never as useful after his restoration. He, however, continued to preach, and was esteemed by most of his acquaintances a sincere Christian and as a father in the gospel, although he had shamefully, though for a short time, departed from the right way. He tells us in his manuscript that about 1791 he was stirred up of God to travel through the churches of Virginia, and to endeavor to encourage them to zeal and perseverance. Though infirm in body he made the attempt. He says he was kindly and respectfully received by the brethren wherever he went, and that his labors were blessed to the desired end.

For about thirty years before his death, he used to say, that he had a presentiment of his death, and that it would not take place until he was seventy-two. And after that he should look for death every day. From want of education he did not know the precise year when that would happen, but said it was one of two years. Accordingly in the year 1798, which was about the time expected, he finished his course. His death was glorious indeed. He declared not only a willingness, but an anxiety to depart and be with Christ. His last words were (turning to a friend standing by), "Do you not see the angels waiting to convey my soul to Glory?"

He lived and died a poor man, having generally a large family.

From the first Grassy Creek was a flourishing church; it had a large membership many of whom possessed considerable wealth and occupied high social position. The house of worship was large and very respectable for that day. Its pastor manifesting the same evangelical zeal as that displayed by Marshall went on long missionary tours and made many converts and baptized them into the membership of his church. In a few years they were to be found in all directions from Grassy Creek in a radius of fifty miles both in Virginia and North Carolina. Thus this church remained for many years "the seat of operations for the denomination in this region." It established many arms or branches among its distant members several of which in time became distinct churches with pastors of their own. Through all the years down to our own time Grassy Creek has retained a large membership and its services have been attended by large congregations.[14] As we have seen in the chapter from Semple, the Sandy Creek Association was meeting with this church when it was decided to divide the Association into three, according to states, that in North Carolina retaining the name of Sandy Creek. The church at Grassy Creek went with the Virginia Associations, first with the General Association till 1788, then with the Roanoke till the formation of the Flat River Association in 1794, when it became a member of that body. We shall see later that in the year 1777 four Separate Baptist churches, three in the counties of North Carolina to the east of Grassy Creek and one in Sussex County, Virginia, united with some Regular Baptist churches to form the re-organized Kehukee Association. These almost certainly owed their origin to the church at Grassy Creek.

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[14] Devin, *op. cit.*

## XIII

# THE SEPARATES IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The remarkable activities of the Sandy Creek Separates seemed to have no limit. They had, as we have seen, gone from Sandy Creek in quick succession to Abbott's Creek, Deep River, Little River, Grassy Creek, Shallow Ford, planting churches in the territory now covered by the counties of Randolph, Chatham, Orange, Guilford, Davidson, Surry, Montgomery, Anson, and Granville, to say nothing of the work in Virginia and South Carolina. The rapidity with which they made converts and organized them into churches and arms of churches in almost marvelous, even when account is taken of the fact that they found large Baptist elements in the population and in some instances gathered the fragments of previously existing Baptist churches. But the story of the labors of Stearns and his fellow laborers is hardly half told. While they were busy with the work in this section they were as active in the east as in the west, covering in their missionary journeys the territory lying east of Haw River and south of the Neuse to the South Carolina line with the exception of the regions where Scotch was spoken.

Two churches in this section are said by Semple to have had delegates at the first meeting of the Sandy Creek Association, in 1758, to wit, New River in Onslow and Black River, which latter church was probably situated somewhere on the river of that name in Sampson or New Hanover County. At that time, however, they had not yet been constituted as distinct churches but were branches of the Sandy Creek church, in which fact we may find a partial explanation of the large growth of that church from 16 to 606 members in three years. According to Asplund, the dates of the organization of the churches of this region are as follows: Bull Tail Swamp, Duplin County, 1756; New River, Onslow County, 1759; Great Cohara, Sampson County, 1759; Trent River, Jones County, 1761. In such records as I have found Bull Tail Swamp is not mentioned in connection with Sandy Creek, nor is Great Cohara. In Asplund's time there was no longer a church in this section by the name of Black River. Before the year 1762 a church which was an arm of Sandy Creek had already been gathered at Lockwood's Folly on the southern coast of Brunswick County.

That the Separate missionaries came very early to the vicinity of New Bern we know from a sketch of Rev. John Dillahunty, who was a member of the church of Trent River from the time of its constitution in 1761 and its pastor from 1781 until his removal to Tennessee in 1796.[1] According to this sketch, which is clearly based upon autobiographical notes, Mr. Dillahunty was born in Maryland, about 1730, bred a Catholic, and married Hannah Neal, a Quakeress, in consequence of which both were excommunicated by their churches. After seeking in vain reconciliation with their parents, the pair left their Maryland home and settled near New Bern, where until his conversion he served as sheriff. Here, probably in February, 1755,[2] he heard the celebrated Whitefield preach, and this was actually the first sermon of any kind he had ever heard. It impressed him greatly and directed his thoughts into an entirely new channel.

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[1] Sprague, *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, p. 851f.

[2] Mr. Whitefield was in Virginia January 17, 1755; he reached Charleston in February. Billingsby, *Whitefield*, 288.

Shortly after Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall appeared in that neighborhood; and though his previous conceptions concerning them were most unfavorable, he was finally induced by his wife, who thought she had been savingly benefited by their ministrations, to attend one of their meetings; and it was the occasion, as he believed, on which his own heart was first opened to receive the word. Shortly after this both he himself and his wife were baptized by the Rev. Philip Mulky, and in due time the church was organized in that neighborhood, of which Mr. Dillahunty became a deacon. He evinced so much ability, especially in conducting religious meetings, that it was not long before the church gave him a regular license to preach.

From this account it appears that Stearns came not once but repeatedly to eastern Carolina, and that on his journeys he was accompanied by that ablest of his fellow missionaries, the Rev. Daniel Marshall. They seem to have preached in many places, in what is now Jones County, probably in Pamlico, in Johnston, in Onslow and Duplin, in New Hanover, in Brunswick. Because of their making these itineraries they were called "strollers" by Governor Dobbs, and "strolling preachers imported from New England" by Rev. James Reed of New Bern.[3] Mr. Reed called them Methodists also, and insisted that the appellation was correct even after Mr. Whitefield had protested that the term Methodists could be properly applied only to the followers of himself and Mr. Wesley.[4] Governor Tryon distinguished them from the Newlights who were the followers of Whitefield by contempuously giving the name of "Superior New Lights."[5] He found them so numerous in the east that he supposed they lived chiefly in the maritime counties.

On coming to this part of North Carolina the Separates preached with their characteristic courage and power. The people of eastern North Carolina had never heard a gospel message such as Stearns and Marshall brought them; that of the General Baptist preachers had been rather tame in comparison. The warmth of the evangelical appeal of such men as Paul Palmer and William Burges had indeed made many converts. But there is no evidence that their preaching had given offense to the Churchmen; they had called men to repentance, but so had the ministers of the Church of England, from whom they differed chiefly in maintaining that immersion was baptism and should follow and not precede conversion.

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[3] *Colonial Records*, VI, 594-95, 1039.

[4] *Colonial Records*, VI, 1060f.

[5] *Colonial Records*, VII, 102.

The Separates on the other hand, coming from New England, had none of the respect felt among certain classes in North Carolina for the ministers of the Establishment. They preached a gospel which challenged the very fundamentals of the established religion, and soon gained a following and influence that filled the missionaries of the Church of England with something akin to alarm and dismay. "Last winter" (1760-61), says Rev. Alexander Stewart of Bath, "I went as far southerly as New River (about 80 miles from home) into Onslow County, the present seat of Enthusiasm in this Province; where having preached twice the few remaining Episcopals there were very thankful to me." He urged the sending of more missionaries to Onslow to counteract the work of the "Enthusiasts."[6] In 1759, the wardens and other prominent Episcopalians of New Hanover in recommending Rev. Michael Smith to the Society speak of his great efforts to "curb (if possible) an Enthusiastic sect which call themselves Anabaptists which is numerous and was daily increasing in this parish."[7] Rev. James Reed confessed that these preachers gave him a "good deal of trouble," though they were active only on the borders of his parish, and had led him to expend much labor in his efforts to check them. He believed that their "study and endeavor was to render both the ministers and the liturgy of the Church of England as odious as possible that themselves and their doctrines may meet a better reception."[8] In that very region where Baptist preachers had been indicted for preaching without a license, and where constables had dispersed their congregations gathered for worship, the only methods now thought of to counteract the influence of the Separate preachers were the use of pamphlets and "meek instruction."[9]

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[6] *Colonial Records*, VI, 562.

[7] *Colonial Records*, VI, 59.

It was a strange doctrine that the Separates brought and doubly strange from the manner of presentation. It was only rarely that the Episcopalian ministers made and baptized an adult convert. They thought of conversion as a result of long and laborious instruction both in the tenets of their church and in morality. They made no emotional appeal and aroused no emotion in the convert. The "strolling preachers from New England," however, said Rev. James Reed writing in 1761, were "preaching up the inexpediency of human learning and the practice of moral virtue, and the great expediency of dreams, visions and immediate revelations."[10] Mr. Reed's words indicate that Stearns and Marshall were in eastern North Carolina preaching in the manner ascribed to them by the historians.[11] They were declaring that no human learning, no human morality would bring one into saving relations with God; that to be saved one must be born again; that no regular and prolonged course of instruction was necessary to bring one into acceptance with God, but only repentance and faith; that to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God; that this was brought about by the irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit; that the one saved had immediate revelation of it in his soul. Under the powerful preaching of Stearns and Marshall there must have been many instances of deep conviction of sin, of striking conversions, of joy unbounded in a sense of sins forgiven. On the lower Neuse, as on the Rappahannock, doubtless the new converts began at once to exhort others to repentance. The sons and daughters were prophesying and the young men were seeing visions and the old men dreaming dreams. Following a custom long kept up, they told of these in relating their Christian experience. That they should have thought themselves peculiarly God's elect is not surprising; they had been sitting in darkness and a great light had risen upon them.

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[8] *Colonial Records*, VI, 565, 594-95. For other expression from Episcopal ministers telling of the great trouble given them by the Separate, or New-light, ministers see *Colonial Records*, VI, 316, 562; VII, 705; IX, 23, 326.

[9] *Colonial Records*, VI, 316, 565.

[10] Of like tone is the following from Rev. Alex. Stewart of Bath, under date of October 10, 1760: "Such a notion of Inspirations, impulses, visions & of their sect being the peculiar elect of God, is gone out among them that till time convinces them to the contrary it is impossible that any abstracted reasons will." *Colonial Records*, VI, 316. Cf. *Colonial Records*, IX, 326, 1003.

[11] See above in the passage quoted from Benedict.

A spirit of Pentecostal enthusiasm pervaded the communities in which the Separates preached. The preachers themselves and their sermons were designated by the terms "enthusiastical," those who followed their teaching were called the "enthusiastical" sect, and the new religion as manifested in the communities where the Separates labored was given the name "Enthusiasm."[12]

Mr. Reed who was a very worthy man, but who could not understand these things and therefore felt no joy when salvation had come to so many houses in his parish, could say nothing better of the Baptists than that they were "obstinately illiterate and grossly ignorant."[13] Though it is evident from their words that all the Episcopal preachers joined with Mr. Reed in regarding opposition to the progress of the Baptists as one of the chief functions of their ministry, and liked to report to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel even small successes in this way,[14] yet some of them were able to see the value of the work done by the Baptist preachers, and others spoke appreciatingly of the courtesies shown them by Baptist churches and people. Thus the Rev. Michael Smith, writing from Johnston County on September 2, 1758, said:

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[12] *Colonial Records,* VI, 562, quoted above, in which Mr. Stewart says that Onslow is the present seat of Enthusiasm. See also *Colonial Records,* V, 960-61; VI, 59.

[13] *Colonial Records,* VI, 265. The passage from which this is taken is interesting: "As to the number of dissenters & of those who profess themselves members of the Church of England I cannot at present be very exact; there are too many that can hardly be said to be of any particular Christian society, and great numbers of dissenters of all denominations come and settle among us from New England, particularly Anabaptists, Quakers, Methodists and Presbyterians; the Anabaptists are obstinately illiterate and grossly ignorant; the Methodists ignorant, censorious and uncharitable; the Quakers rigid; but the Presbyterians pretty moderate except here and there a bigot or a rigid Calvinist." Letter to the Secretary, June 26, 1760.

> I find that these preachers have been of great service to me in my office, for many of the back settlers who were in a manner totally ignorant of the Christian religion and overrun with sensuality have been roused from their treacherous slumbers, brought to a serious way of thinking, and from hearing enthusiastical incoherent harangues have been prepared for more solid discourses.[15]

Rev. Alex. Stewart of Bath testified to the courteous hearing given him by the Baptists of New River, who assured him that they were glad to hear that in many things their disputes with the Episcopalians were only about words.[16] Like testimony was given by Rev. Mr. Barnett, in a letter of February 3, 1766, in which he tells that the Baptists of Lockwood's Folly had offered him the use of their meeting house, where he proposed to preach once in two months.[17]

One feature of the preaching of the Separates remains to be discussed—that which had to do with the subject of baptism. Doubtless they had not neglected it at any of the places where they had preached, but in the western counties there were no Episcopalian preachers to take note of it, whereas in the eastern counties the teachings of the Baptists was a distinct challenge to the correctness of their teachings and practice in this regard. On his visit in 1764 Mr. Whitefield had been at pains to declare that the Baptists could not properly be called Methodists and classed as his followers since they practiced believer's baptism and did not baptize infants, wherein he declared himself fully in accord with the usage of the Church of England.[18]

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[14] *Colonial Records,* V, 961-62; VI, 59, 316; VIII, 353; IX, 326.

[15] *Colonial Records,* V, 961-62.

[16] *Colonial Records,* V, 562.

[17] *Colonial Records,* VII, 164.

With this declaration Mr. Reed confessed he was pleased, since he hoped it would counteract the teachings of the Separates. Although the missionaries of the Society had been able to gather few communicants they found the people ready to have their children baptized and had reported astonishingly large numbers of baptisms of children. Herein lay their principal success. Hence, it was only natural that they should become alarmed when they found the Baptist preachers leading the people to believe that to baptize unconverted children was not scriptural. Their most productive field of labor was invaded. As they saw the Baptists, already numerous, increasing daily, they redoubled their activity, preaching in more places and going on long tours, to check their further spread.[19] As they were not able to reach all, some distributed tracts, while one at least, Rev. Alex. Stewart of Bath, wrote a tract in defense of infant baptism and distributed four hundred copies of it among his parishioners, seemingly convinced that his production had great influence in causing an abatement of Baptist enthusiasm.

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[18] *Colonial Records,* VI, 1060f. Letter from Rev. James Reed, Dec. 21, 1764. "On Saturday the 17th of Nov., last the Rev. Mr. Whitfield arrived here from the Northern Provinces on his journey to South Carolina, Georgia, and at the request of the inhabitants of this town stayed and preached on Sunday in the forenoon to a very numerous Congregation & in the afternoon proceeded on his journey. . . . In his conversation with the Parish Clerk he mentioned the particular number of small tracts which the Society had sent me, & seemed to intimate that in my letter to the Society, I had improperly called the enthusiastic sect in these parts by the name of Methodists, for that none were properly called by that name but the followers of himself & Mr. Wesley. Tho' with submission to Mr. Whitfield, granting they were not his immediate disciples and followers, I do affirm they sprung from the seed which he first planted in New England and the difference of soil may perhaps have caused such an alteration in the fruit that he may be ashamed of it. However, on the whole I think his discourse has been of some service here, for he particularly condemned the rebaptizing of Adults & the doctrine of the irresistible influence of the Spirit, for both which the late Methodists in these parts had strongly contended; and likewise recommended infant Baptism, & declared himself a minister of the Church of England."

[19] *Colonial Records,* VI, 59, 562.

Immersion also was giving him and other missionaries of the Society trouble. They discovered that immersion was after all the Apostolic mode and in accord with the rubric of the Episcopalian Church, and now began to administer baptism to adults by that mode when they could thereby save a member to their church from a people "almost bewitched" by the preaching of the Baptists.[20] Other missionaries of the Society who found it necessary to baptize by immersion were Rev. John MacDowell of Brunswick, and Rev. C. E. Taylor of Northampton.[21] Even Mr. Reed of New Bern offered to baptize in this way.[22]

The above account gives some indication of the character, extent and influence of the preaching of the Separates in the southeastern section of the Province. Governor Dobbs and the Episcopalian ministers always mention them as the most numerous and aggressive body of Dissenters; the Baptists, the Governor said, were in all parts of the Province; the Rev. Michael Smith found Baptists in Johnston, and when for some unexplained reason he had changed his field to New Hanover the burden of his work was, if possible, to check the progress of the Baptists; the Rev. Alexander Stewart of Bath found Baptists so numerous and enthusiastic in Onslow that very few Episcopalians were left, while to counteract their influence in Pamlico he had to write tracts on Baptism and baptize converts by immersion; the Rev. James Reed of Craven declared that these same Baptists, whom he called Methodists, were giving him a good deal of trouble, while the Rev. George Whitefield, on his short stop in New Bern in 1764, took pains to declaim against what he called the "rebaptism" of adults and for the baptism of infants, in order to make it plain that the Baptists did not belong to his flock.

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[20] *Colonial Records,* VI, 316. "When I mentioned that I baptized a person by immersion I should be sorry that it should be thought by the Society that it was either through affectation or singularity. I assure you, sir (tho' I know that it is conformable to our Rubric, to the practice of the Primitive Christians, of the Apostles, & of the Jews before the coming of our Savior, generally to Baptize in that way), that it is only to keep people from falling off from our church that this person and some others not mentioned have been baptized in that way by me, for of late years this Province is overrun with a people that at first called themselves Anabaptists, but having now refined upon that scheme, have run into as many errors & have so bewildered & I may almost say bewitched the minds of the people, that they will scarcely listen to anything that may be said in defence of the church we belong to. As far as my capacity and abilities would admit I have done my best endeavors to confute their errors. I wrote a small tract collected from the best authors I could find in defence of the Baptism of our church (4 copies of which I sent to the Society last year). I dispensed 400 copies of it gratis thro' this province, for want of Dr. Wall's abridgement of his history; this for some time check'd their proceedings, but such a spirit of rash judging & censoriousness, such a notion of inspirations, impulses visions & of their sect being the peculiar elect of God is gone out among them that till time convinces them to the contrary it is impossible that any abstracted reasons will. However, Sr. if there be any pamphlets in the societies collection in defence of the articles of the rubric of our church they can no where be better bestowed than in this province." Oct. 10, 1760.

[21] *Colonial Records,* VI, 729; IX, 326.

[22] *Colonial Records,* IX, 6. "I had the satisfaction last summer to Baptize the Honorable Chief Justice of this Province. He was bred and born an Anabaptist but had never been baptized, and as I suspected he might still retain a particular liking for Anabaptism, I offered to baptize him by immersion. But he refused," etc. July 2, 1771.

Not all the converts were organized into churches. One reason for this was that they were widely scattered. We have seen that it was not uncommon for people to go forty and fifty and even a hundred miles to hear Stearns and Marshall preach. Such people on returning to their homes after gladly receiving the word and being baptized would often be remote from other such converts and thus for them church membership would be almost impossible. Another reason was that among the new converts only rarely could one be found who had the necessary qualifications for a minister. And it should be said here that Stearns seems to have laid hands hastily on no man. So far as our records show the men whom he ordained preachers in the various churches were men of intelligence and of some education. James Read, it is true, of Grassy Creek was illiterate at the time of his conversion, but he was ordained only after several years. Joseph Murphy, William Murphy, Samuel Harris, Daniel Marshall, Elnathan Davis, Dutton Lane, John Newton, Philip Mulky, Joseph Breed, and those of whom I shall speak presently, Ezekiel Hunter, James McDaniel, Charles Markland, were all men of more than ordinary ability and most of them demonstrably men of intellectual quality and education much above the average. When such a man could not be found Stearns might license one who seemed proper to exhort, but he did not ordain him as minister of a church. The congregation to which the licensed exhorter belonged remained an arm of the parent church at Sandy Creek or some other church which had attained independent status. It is not at all improbable that several such branch churches were organized in this southeastern section. But several were soon constituted as independent churches.

As we have been considering the work in Craven County, which then included the present county of Jones, I will begin with the church afterwards called Trent, although it was probably not the first in this section to be organized. Like the others it seems at first to have been a branch of the church at Sandy Creek, but in 1761 it became a distinct body.[23] Previous to that time the Rev. Philip Mulky who moved to South Carolina in 1760 had preached here and baptized, carrying on the labors begun by Stearns and Marshall.[24] In 1772, when Morgan Edwards wrote, its pastor was Rev. James McDaniel, who was probably among the converts made by Marshall and Stearns and ordained pastor at the constitution of the church. Our records show that there was a James McDaniel living in Craven County at this time whose father was Thomas McDaniel.[25] During the trying times of the war of the Revolution the church became pastorless, probably through the death of Mr. McDaniel, and its membership was sadly dispersed. During this time Rev. John Dillahunty, already a licensed minister, like so many other Baptist preachers of that day, was actively engaged in the Revolution. He continued, however, to preach to the congregation as occasion offered, and in 1781, he set about collecting the scattered flock and reorganized them at Chinquepin Chapel in that portion of Craven which had been set off as Jones County in 1779. This place was a few miles from the former place of worship. He was now ordained pastor, a position which he continued to hold until the end of 1795, when, like many other North Carolinians of his day, he was taken with a "sudden and powerful impulse," for all his advanced age, to move to Tennessee. Thither accordingly he went.[26] An incident connected with his work at Trent is found in the following paragraph, from the sketch above referred to:

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[23] Asplund.

[24] *Annals of Am. Baptist Pulpit,* p. 851.

[25] Grimes. *Abstract of N. C. Wills.* MacDaniel, Thomas, made a will on Nov. 29, 1759. "*Sons*: John and James (plantation to each), Risdon. *Daughter,* Levinah. *Wife and Executrix,* Margaret. *Executor,* John Oliver. *Witnesses:* Bassett Simmons, E. Bryan, David B(ryan). No probate.

> Mr. Dillahunty remained in connection with this church fifteen years. In his immediate neighborhood was one of those splendid old Parish churches, erected by the Government in Colonial times, for the ministers of the Established Church. The incumbent of this church [Rev. James Reed], on the breaking out of the War of the Revolution, as his sympathies were altogether with the mother country, fled to England, leaving his numerous and wealthy flock to the tender mercies of the Whigs. They commenced to attend the ministry of Mr. Dillahunty; and the consequence was not only that some of them joined his church, but that the Vestry met, and, having determined that the right to the property was in them, unanimously gave the whole to him and his church, "to be owned and used by them and their successors, and by them and their successors only, forever." Mr. Dillahunty, accordingly took possession, and preached regularly, and so rich was the blessing that attended his labors that nearly the whole congregation professed religion and united with his church. The Methodists subsequently disputed their right to the property, on the ground that, as part

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[26] From the church at Coor Creek, Craven County, the pastor, Elder William Phipps, in 1797, likewise went to Tennessee. Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association*, p. 293.

and parcel of the Episcopal Church, they were themselves its legal representatives and successors; but their claims were summarily and successfully opposed by the old Vestry, and Mr. Dillahunty was allowed to proceed unmolested in his labors.

In 1793, according to Asplund, the Trent church had 93 members. It was then in the Kehukee Association; in addition to Mr. Dillahunty it had as licensed ministers Abraham Little and John Coonts (Koonce), the latter of whom became pastor on the departure of Dillahunty.[27]

Closely connected with the church on the Trent was that on Southwest, which was probably located in the present county of Lenoir. Morgan Edwards says that it owed its establishment to Rev. Charles Markland, who moved to this place from New River about 1760, and making fifteen converts gathered them into a congregation which in October, 1762, was constituted a church by a presbytery sent from Sandy Creek. Among the constituents were Kittrell Mundine and wife and John Dillahunty and wife. We have already seen something of Dillahunty. Like him Mundine became a minister, and as late as 1790 was serving churches in this region.[28] Another early member of this church was Colonel Nathan Bryan of whom more will be told below in another division of this work.[29]

In 1772 the pastor of Southwest, which was at that time listed by Morgan Edwards as a church of the Sandy Creek Association, was still Rev. Charles Markland. He was a prominent citizen of Dobbs County, living near Kinston. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he joined the army. Later he was a member of the Board of Trustees that organized Dobbs Academy at Kinston in the year 1785. It is probable that he did not preach after he gave up his pastorate to become a soldier. I find no trace of this church after the Revolution. Probably its membership was scattered by the Revolutionary War and after its close was gathered with that of the Trent church into one body. In this way possibly is to be explained the statement of Burkitt and Read that John Dillahunty succeeded James McDaniel as its pastor.

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[27] Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association,* p. 304.

[28] Asplund. We learn from the *Colonial Records* that Mundine was active as a patriot.

[29] Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association,* 302. "He was baptized at 18 years of age, and became a member of the Southwest of Neuse."

Other churches in Craven County organized or reorganized soon after the close of the War of the Revolution were Swift Creek in 1784 (this was organized as a Particular Baptist church in 1756), Goose Creek in 1784, and Coor Creek, a branch of Swift Creek, in 1791. In 1793, these had as their ministers, William Phipps, James Brinson and Joel Willis respectively. The last two had lost half their members in the last three years, probably by removals to Tennessee. I shall speak of these later under the head of the Kehukee Association of which they became members.[30]

One of the earliest Baptist churches as well as one of the most active to be established in this region was that of New River in Onslow County. Asplund gives the date of its constitution as 1759. Semple says that its delegates were at the meeting of the Sandy Creek Association in its first year, 1758, either at its January or its June meeting, at which time it was probably an arm of the Sandy Creek church.

The people of New River had long been warm towards religion. We have seen that Dr. Marsden, an Episcopal minister living on the Cape Fear, officiated gratis there in 1732 under the encouragement of Governor Burrington and a Mr. Williams. About the same time Rev. Mr. LaPierre found about a hundred families there, poor indeed but much interested in religion. In the years 1742 to 1747 they were visited by Rev. James Moir whose home was on the Cape Fear, who attributed to their ignorance their unwillingness to build churches and support a minister. We have also seen that Morgan Edwards had a note to the effect that Paul Palmer had gathered a church here. Mr. Edwards does not state the date, but seems to indicate it was about 1743—only a deduction. Being without a pastor, it seems not to have kept up its organization, but doubtless many holding Baptist views were here twenty years later, and it was probably some of these who invited Stearns and his fellows to come and preach among them. But of this we have no record. We know only that the church was already established in 1758, though if we are to believe Asplund it did not become a distinct church until 1759, when probably Ezekiel Hunter was ordained its pastor in which office he continued until his death not sooner than 1773.[31] Probably because of his zeal and labors, in which he was a worthy disciple of Stearns and Marshall, the Baptist cause greatly prospered in Onslow. Almost the whole population became Baptist, and so great was their enthusiasm that the fame thereof spread all over eastern North Carolina. Rev. Ebenezer Stewart of Bath, eighty miles distant, wrote of it to the Society in London, whose missionary he was, and suggested sending more missionaries thither, to stop the defection from the Church of England, for, as we have seen, these Churchmen, while for the most part worthy men "made war on schism with so much vigor that they had little leisure to make war on vice" (Macaulay). In Onslow, however, their war on schism was wholly ineffectual in checking the progress of the Baptists. The church at New River became a center from which the Baptist ministers, Ezekiel Hunter and his successor, Robert Nixon, went with their message not only to the surrounding communities but across the Cape Fear into Bladen and to the uttermost parts of Brunswick.

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[30] Asplund. Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association,* p. 293ff.

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[31] Ezekiel Hunter was probably the son of Nicholas Hunter of Carteret, whose will was made in 1750 (Grimes, *N. C. Wills*, p. 177), and of which his son Ezekiel became Executor. Burkitt and Read suppose that he died about the year 1772 (*History of Kehukee Association*, p. 297), but he was a member for Onslow of the General Assembly which held its session from January 25 to March 6, 1773. Dr. N. B. Cobb (*N. C. Baptist Hist. Papers*, I, 92), followed by Hufham, says that Ezekiel Hunter was from Randolph County. He cites no authority for his statement.

We have scant records of the work of these New River Baptists, but enough to show their missionary zeal. In 1762 Rev. Ezekiel Hunter made a journey to Lockwood's Folly, where, as we shall see, other Separate preachers had been as early as 1757 or 1758.[32] Here he received and baptized some members, and made the church from this time until it obtained a regular pastor a branch of the New River church. We next find Mr. Hunter about the year 1765 in Bladen and Brunswick, where he organized a church which seems to have had two coördinate branches, one at White Swamp in Bladen County and the other at Livingston's Creek in Brunswick. After the death of Mr. Hunter about the year 1773, the church of Bladen County was without an ordained pastor until the year 1797, when it came under the pastoral care of Rev. Ezekiel Bryan. In the meantime it had been served by his father, William Bryan, who had been baptized by Hunter and licensed to preach but never ordained. The result was that the pastoral functions were not performed, and when Rev. Ezekiel Bryan took charge in 1797 the church was almost extinct. Under his care, however, the work prospered and the two churches continued in their coöperative relationship with Mr. Bryan pastor of both.[33]

Of Elder Ezekiel Hunter there is little other record. It is practically certain that he preached the gospel through the counties of Duplin, Sampson, New Hanover, and Carteret, and in absence of some one else to whom to ascribe the early development of the Baptist churches in this section it is reasonable to suppose that it was due to the labors of Mr. Hunter and of him who immediately followed him in the pastorate at New River, the celebrated Robert Nixon. Our further records of Mr. Hunter are of his work as a member for Onslow County of the General Assembly that met in New Bern in January, February and March, 1773. In this Mr. Hunter was very active and his name is often mentioned in the journal of the proceedings. A bill introduced by him for the better observance of the Sabbath and the promotion of morality throughout the Province was enacted into law; he was often entrusted with messages to the Governor and Council, which would suggest that he enjoyed the confidence of both the lower house and the Governor.[34] He was probably still in the full possession of his powers when he died soon after the adjournment of the Assembly.

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[32] Burkitt and Read, *History of the Kehukee Association,* p. 297.

[33] Burkitt and Read, p. 299f. They begin their short account of this church with the following paragraph: "This church contains two branches, viz. one on Livingston's creek, the other on the White Marsh in Bladen County (Now Columbus County). About the year 1765 it pleased the Lord to send the gospel into Bladen by Elder Ezekial Hunter. The Lord was pleased to bless his labors, and there was a church gathered, and William Bryan being one of that number, in a short time after it pleased the Lord to call him to the ministry. He was approved by the church and exercised his gift but was never ordained. Elder Hunter died soon after he began to preach, and the church was left as sheep without a shepherd. William Bryan labored among them many years through afflictions and difficulties until the 26th of March, 1797, when he died."

Mr. Hunter was succeeded in the pastoral care of the Church on New River by Elder Robert Nixon, a remarkably pious, zealous and useful minister of Jesus Christ, whose extended and fruitful service was long remembered in eastern North Carolina.[35] For full twenty years he was pastor of the New River church, but his activities extended all over southeastern North Carolina. During his ministry, if not before, the church at New River had a branch at White Oak River in Jones County, of which he had the care.[36] After 1772 for many years this "worthy old servant of the Lord" frequently visited the church at Lockwood's Folly which was without a pastor. In fact, it is evident from the general tenor of the records and the respectful terms in which Nixon is spoken of that he exercised a primacy among the Baptist ministers of this section. General Baptists, Particular Baptists, and all forgot their distinction and engaged with him in pressing the work of the Lord from the Neuse to the South Carolina line. In his work in Brunswick and at Lockwood's Folly he was associated with Rev. Samuel Newton and others. About the year 1785 Mr. Nixon with others assisted in the organization of the church on Muddy Creek in Duplin County, and in 1793 he joined with Elders Dillahunty and Oliver in ordaining Elder Job Thigpen as pastor. In 1788 the church at New River became a member of the Kehukee Association.

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[34] See the journal of the Assembly in *Colonial Records,* IX, 448f.

[35] Burkitt and Read, p. 293. "Elder Robert Nixon was a remarkable pious zealous minister of Christ. He was of the Separate order at first, but joined the Kehukee Association some years after the revolution in that Association. After a long and very singular useful life, it was the good will of his Lord and Master to call him home the 4th of December, 1794."

[36] Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association,* p. 293.

I have said that Rev. Samuel Newton was associated with Rev. Robert Nixon in missionary work in Brunswick County. This Rev. Samuel Newton was pastor of the church very early known as Bull Tail, and since as Wells Chapel. According to Asplund, this church was established in the year 1756, but its name was not mentioned by Morgan Edwards, who also omits mention of other churches in this section, having only vaguely heard of Paul Palmer's work on New River. According to Hon. J. T. Alderman, a native of this region, whose great grandfather was a brother of Samuel Newton, its first minister was Samuel Newton, who continued in that service until his death some time during the Revolutionary War. He was said to be a great preacher and religious leader. The fact that he cooperated with Rev. Robert Nixon in serving Lockwood's Folly, a church at that time belonging to the Sandy Creek Association, would suggest that he also was a Separate or that the distinction of Separate and Regular was soon disregarded in eastern North Carolina.[37]

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[37] Mr. Alderman's statement is as follows: "These (Revs. A. B. Alderman, George Fennell, G. W. Hufham, David Wells) were all well informed men and deeply interested in the old church. It was never a question

Black River is on the list of churches given by Semple as having delegates at the Sandy Creek Association in the year of its organization in 1758. This church seems to have been situated somewhere on Black River in the present county of Duplin, and was probably in some way connected with the church on Bull Tail, which is a creek emptying into Black River. On March 7, 1757, Rev. John Newton was ordained as its pastor, and probably served it in that capacity until his departure for South Carolina in 1765.[38] This John Newton, according to Morgan Edwards, was born in Kent County, Pennsylvania, August 7, 1732; was baptized in 1752 by Rev. Isaac Potts in Southampton County, Virginia; was instrumental in the conversion of Rev. Philip Mulky near Roanoke in Halifax County, North Carolina, about 1756; was ordained in 1757; and after going to South Carolina he was again ordained as colleague of Rev. Joseph Reese in the ministry of the Congaree church in 1768. Both he and Reese got into trouble because they had accepted this ordination at the hands of two Particular Baptist ministers, Rev. Oliver Hart and Rev. Evan Pugh, and were silenced by the Sandy Creek Association. Reese making proper acknowledgments was restored but Newton refusing was forced to leave off in the midst of a useful and successful work.[39] Morgan Edwards says that his labors in North Carolina were much blest.

We do not know what Separate minister first preached at

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among them as to the organization of old Bulltail church. No one ever questioned the fact that it was organized by Rev. Samuel Newton in 1756. It had been the home of the Newtons, the Aldermans, the Hufhams, the Wellses, the Highsmiths, the DeVanes, the Rogerses, and many other families known there to this day. It was said of him, Samuel Newton, that he was a 'great preacher' and the religious leader of his times. He was pastor till the time of his death, which occurred during the Revolutionary War."

[38] The date of his ordination is found in Morgan Edwards' Notebook on South Carolina Baptists, that of his coming to South Carolina in the *Materials*, etc., for that State.

[39] Morgan Edwards, *Materials* for South Carolina.

Black River, whether Stearns and Marshall on some of their early itineraries to the east, or Newton himself. As early as 1756 Rev. Hugh McAden found many people in all this section eager to have the gospel preached among them. Some were doubtless the converts of Rev. Edward Brown, a General Baptist of the Kehukee Church, who began preaching on the Great Cohara as early as 1749. Morgan Edwards seems not to have visited this section of the Province and says nothing of this church and does nothing more than mention the names of the churches at New River and Lockwood's Folly. It is probable that before Morgan Edwards's tour in 1772 the church at Black River had been brought to extinction by the removal of its members to other provinces to escape the unjust taxation and extortions of officers under Tryon's administration. Such migrations had reduced the once large Great Cohara church to eight members, and doubtless greatly depleted all the churches of this section.

Extending almost due west from the mouth of the Cape Fear to the South Carolina line is a stretch of coast thirty miles long. It is broken by several inlets, the most important of which are Lockwood's Folly and Shallotte, between which is the central portion of the coast about eight miles in length. Here about the year 1755 settled a small colony of fishermen from Cape May at the mouth of the Delaware River. Since its settlement Cape May had among its inhabitants some Baptists. In 1712 they were gathered into a church which became a member of the Philadelphia Association. Though they were poor and not able to maintain a minister through all the years, they were yet a devout people and had the encouragement and respect of the Philadelphia Association, which often sent ministers to supply the Cape May church.[40] The little company on coming to

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[40] For the exact place of settlement in North Carolina see the letter of Rev. John MacDowell, *Colonial Records,* VII, 730. For the Cape May church see the *History of the Philadelphia Association,* p. 16f.

North Carolina brought their Baptist principles and Christian morals with them, and living in a compact colony were able to continue them. In some way they were soon in communication with the Separates of Sandy Creek. According to Burkitt and Read, about the year 1757 or 1758 Nathaniel Powell and James Turner came into this quarter preaching the gospel. Nathaniel Powell was a prominent member of the Deep River church and its delegate to the first session of the Sandy Creek Association. Later he became a member of the Haw River church and as a licensed minister was assistant to its pastor, Rev. Elnathan Davis. Under the preaching of these Separate missionaries some were converted. We hear no more of visits of Baptist preachers for several years, but in the meantime they were not ashamed to acknowledge their Separate Baptist faith, and had come to the attention of the Rev. John MacDowell, the minister of the Brunswick parish.[41] In 1762, as we have seen, Rev. Ezekiel Hunter, the minister of the New River church, came to this congregation, preached and baptized, and organized Lockwood's Folly as an arm of the New River church. After this, probably with Lockwood's Folly as his headquarters, Mr. Hunter engaged in active labors south of the Cape Fear. We have seen that in 1765 he organized the churches in Brunswick County, White Marsh in what is now Columbus County, and Livingston's Creek. And either Mr. Hunter or some of his assistants had been laboring very effectually in all southern Brunswick, including much that is now Columbus, where next the South Carolina line were growing settlements of people hungry for the gospel.[42] During these years the Baptists here had greatly increased in numbers. They had a freedom in their public worship which shocked the minister of the Parish of St. Philip, Mr. Barnett, who having heard probably of their prayer meeting services reported that the most illiterate among them were their teachers and that even Negroes spoke in their meetings. However, he was just to acknowledge the courtesy of the Lockwood's Folly congregation in offering the use of their meeting house for his services, which he thought he should accept and officiate once in two months.[43]

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[41] *Colonial Records,* VII, 730. "We have," said Mr. MacDowell, "no dissenters of any sort, excepting a few poor families of Fishermen, who came in from Cape May at the mouth of the river, Delewar, and are settled by the sea side between the mouths of the Rivers Lockwood's folly and Shallot; they call themselves new light Anabaptists." The letter from which this is taken is dated June 15, 1762.

[42] Both Mr. MacDowell and Mr. Barnett speak of these eager congregations. The former writing from Brunswick on February 9, 1760, said:

Rev. Ezekiel Hunter continued to visit them until his death in 1773. In the meantime Rev. James Turner had come and settled among them and was acting as pastor. He died soon after the death of Hunter. But the church at Lockwood's Folly was not forgotten by the New River church. The successor of Hunter, Rev. Robert Nixon, following the example of his predecessor often visited them, and other preachers, among them Rev. Samuel Newton, served them occasionally through the years until the close of the Revolutionary War.[44]

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"I have been out as far as the border of South Carolina where I had a great number of people from both Provinces, that we were obliged to assemble under the Shady trees." *Colonial Records,* VI, 225. Mr. Barnett writing of August 27, 1767, said: "Nine times in the year I preach at the Boundary House situated on the line between the two Carolinas. Here is a large congregation."

[43] *Colonial Records,* VII, 164. Letter of Rev. John Barnett, February 3, 1766.

[44] Burkitt and Read's account of this church is as follows: "About the year 1757 or '58, Nathaniel Powell and James Turner came into that quarter, preaching the gospel, whose ministerial labors the Lord blessed to the conversion of some souls. In about 1762, came Elder Ezekiel Hunter, who was pastor of the Baptist church on New River in Onslow County, and received and baptized some members here, and were considered a branch of his church. James Turner settled amongst them, and continued to preach with zeal and success. Thus the church stood until the death of Elder Hunter, which took place about 1772, and said Turner died shortly after. Then they were visited frequently by that worthy old servant of the Lord, Robert Nixon, from New River, and Samuel Newton and others, who supplied them with ministerial aid till Elder William Goodwin, who had been pastor of a church in Duplin County, N. C., moved into the county of Brunswick, and took the pastoral care of them about the year 1788, and continued in that office till his death,

With Lockwood's Folly ends the list of Separate Baptist churches mentioned by either Morgan Edwards or Semple as organized before 1772 in North Carolina. In this region south of the Neuse the Separates were not the only Baptists who were laboring in this period, but they were predominant. It was their evangelizing zeal that won the inhabitants and gave character and direction to the entire Baptist work there. Its ministers were the leading ministers and their churches the leading churches. The church at New River very early became the strongest in all this section. Its ministers, Rev. Ezekiel Hunter and Rev. Robert Nixon, extended its influence from the Neuse to the mouth of the Cape Fear. They established arms of the church at White Oak in the present county of Jones, at Lockwood's Folly and Livingstone's Creek in Brunswick, and at White Marsh in the present county of Columbus. And we soon find the ministers of other churches coming under the oversight and direction of the Separate ministers. Rev. Edward Brown, it is true, had come to Great Cohara as a General Baptist in 1749,

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which was in 1793. Shortly after his decease, Abram Baker, who formerly resided on Neuse, and exercised the pastoral care of a church situate in the counties of Pitt, Dobbs and other counties adjacent, moved into the county of Brunswick, and attended their meetings for several years, but finding the principal part of the old and most pious members deceased or moved away, and the remainder scattered through a large and extensive country, living remote from each other, and so much coldness prevailing amongst them, that they could not be collected even to hold conferences, he refused to take the pastoral care of them in that situation, but recommended them to collect together, and renew fellowship by relating their experience, and renewing their church covenant; to which they consented, and accordingly Saturday, the 11th of February, 1797, was appointed, and helps sent for; the worthy Francis Oliver attended, the business was entered upon, at which time no more than six members were received, besides Elder Baker; when upon their entering anew into church covenant, he consented to take the pastoral charge. Since that time five or six have been received, who were formerly members; but the Lord has been pleased to add to the church, until the number returned to the last Association was 67. Since which five have been received, which makes the number 72. In March 1801, a meeting on the west side of Waccamaw river was first appointed for the reception of members on the Seven Creeks, near which two or three members lived. The Lord has so blessed the work there, that they dismissed upward of 30 members on that side of the river, who were constituted into a church on the 25th November, 1803, and Elder Job Goodman ordained their pastor."

and had remained there as a Particular Baptist after 1759; Elders Jeremy Rhame and John Nobles had organized the church at Bear Marsh on February 25, 1763;[45] Rev. Stephen Hollingsworth, a freeholder of Bladen County, who was connected with the Welsh Neck Baptists, a zealous Calvinist and preacher since 1750, was visiting this section, at least occasionally, as early as 1759,[46] and according to Furman's *History of the Charleston Association*, had organized "the church in Bladen" in January, 1756; other Welsh Neck ministers, as Thomas Browne and Benjamin Moseley, were also coming somewhat later to what is now Robeson County;[47] Job Thigpen before he came under the influence of Rev. Robert Nixon had preached as a General Baptist at Muddy Creek in Duplin. But most of these were soon found coöperating with the New River church and its ministers. Thus Thigpen himself became a member of the New River church before he sought ordination, and was licensed there;[48] and was ordained by Separate Baptist ministers,[49] and we find Rev. Francis Oliver, then in his first youth, although he became pastor of a Bear Marsh church which began as a Particular Baptist church, assisting in the ordination of Thigpen and in the reorganization of the Lockwood's Folly church.[50] The great revival which spread the Baptist influence through all this section was begun by Stearns and the other Separates, and in the end the Baptists of all shades of belief came under the Separate influence. On the reorganization of the Kehukee Association in 1777 several churches in Warren, Halifax and Edgecombe were already Separate Baptist churches. In reality, however, after the churches of the Kehukee

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[45] Burkitt and Read, *History of Kehukee Association*, p. 288.

[46] Morgan Edwards says that he assisted in the ordination of Rev. Edward Brown at Great Cohara in that year.

[47] Burkitt and Read, *History of Kehukee Association*, p. 290f.

[48] Asplund, edition of 1791, lists Thigpen as a licentiate of New River.

[49] *History of Kehukee Association*, p. 292. Elders Dillahunty, Nixon and Oliver.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 292, 298.

Association showed a purpose to conform to the Separate standards of admission to church membership, of which I shall treat when I come to deal with the Kehukee Association, the distinction between Separate and Particular, or Regular as the Particular Baptists now began to call themselves, was forgotten or disregarded. And so it was in the churches between the Neuse and the South Carolina line. After the Revolutionary War the name Separate, which had never been used by Stearns's followers themselves, and the name Newlights, which up until that time had been their more usual designation, were both allowed to fall into disuse. And such was largely the fate of all other distinguishing words to denote Baptists. They were Baptists and nothing more. Morgan Edwards had seen that between Separates and Particular Baptists there had come to be little difference. In discussing the former he said: "These are called Separates, not because they withdrew from the Regular Baptists but because they have hitherto declined union with them. The faith and order of both are the same, except some trivial matters not sufficient to support a distinction, much less a disunion; for both avow the Century Confession and the annexed discipline."[51]

But so far as North Carolina is concerned there can be no doubt that at first there was a very important difference between the Separates and those called Regular, or Particular Baptists. The Particular Baptists of this Province had been schooled to a rigid Calvinism through a reaction from the too free Arminianism of the General Baptists. The Separates were possibly as ready in 1772 as today to accept the Philadelphia Confession, but then as now they disregarded the implications of its Calvinistic teachings. Their early preachers called men to repentance, and they cried, Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Inspired by Shubal Stearns's moral earnestness and love for souls and adopting his tone and gestures they preached with the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, whose irresistible work in the conversion of souls they proclaimed to a people who had hardly heard whether there be a Holy Spirit. And the Lord gave his word free course and it ran and was glorified in the conversion of people who would never otherwise have been reached. It was thus they occupied the part of North Carolina which had lain fallow until their coming. A little later I will tell of their spread from North Carolina to other regions owing to providences felt grievous at the time but now known to have been ordained of the Lord. At present it will be sufficient to repeat the words of Morgan Edwards:

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[51] Edwards, MS. History of Virginia Baptists.

> Sandy Creek church is the mother of all the Separate Baptists. From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them who published it; it, in 17 years, has spread branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesapeake Bay; and northward to the waters of the Potomac; it, in 17 years, is become the mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers. . . . I believe a preternatural and invisible hand works in the assemblies of the Separate Baptists bearing down the human mind, as was the case in the primitive churches, I Cor. xiv:25.

We have seen that several of the ministers of the Church of England regarded it as not the least important part of their work to check, if possible the increase of the Baptists. Still other pastors than those mentioned were forced to take account of them. Mr. Earl, writing from Edenton on March, 1766, asked the Society to send him some tracts for the confutation of the Quakers and Anabaptists of a neighboring parish since only by their use could he hope to explode what he considered their skeptical tenets, because they were so prejudiced that they would not come to hear sermons by Episcopalian ministers.[52] Possibly the Baptists spoken of by Mr. Earl were Particular Baptists but those of Granville County of whom Rev. James McCartney complained in 1769 were Separates. Along with a great many Presbyterians he found a great many Baptists in his Parish, the latter of whom he considered "great bigots." But he declared he would take every prudent method to abolish dissension and make converts to the Church.[53] Rev. John Barnett also, who having removed from Brunswick was laboring in Northampton County in 1770, found the New Light Baptists increasing very rapidly. One of his meetings had been attended by two Baptist "teachers," another by three, and still a third by four, all bringing some of their members with them. Mr. Barnett expressed the hope that by weekly lectures he might stop the defection from the Church of England and draw back many who had strayed from it.[54] A like ardor inspired the Rev. Charles Cupples of Bute, which embraced the present counties of Warren and Franklin. On coming here in 1768 he supposed that Dissenters were few, and they such as were called "Ranting Anabaptists," who under his ministry were mightily decreasing, and if the Church only had a bishop to enforce a proper discipline dissension would soon be at an end; but after three years he has found the Baptists quite numerous at least in one corner of his parish; thanks to his preaching, however, they were, he thought, returning under a thorough conviction of their error.[55] Rev. Theodorus Swaine Drage, who had been sent to Rowan by Governor Tryon in 1770, names the "Separate Anabaptists" among his opponents, some of whom had characteristic Baptist views, telling Mr. Drage that it was their opinion that every one ought to support his own clergy by voluntary contributions and not be constrained by law to pay a minister of an Establishment.[56]

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[52] *Colonial Records,* VII, 192.

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[53] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 86.

[54] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 228.

[55] *Colonial Records,* VII, 705; VIII, 553.

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[56] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 203. The following from *Mr. Woodmason's Account of North Carolina Made in 1776, Colonial Records,* VII, though exaggerated, indicates what kind of stories a stranger might hear on coming to the Province in that year: "Africa never more abounded with new monsters than Pennsylvania with New Sects who are continually sending their Emissaries around—one of these parties known by the Title of *New Lights* or the *Gifted Brethren* (for they pretend to Inspiration) now infect the whole Back country and have even penetrated South Carolina. One of C. W.'s strongest endeavors must be to disperse these wretches which will not be a hard task as they will fly before him as chaff. . . .

"The most zealous among the Sects to propagate their notions and form establishments are the anabaptists. When the Church of England was established in Carolina the Presbyterians made great struggle but finding themselves too weak they determined to effect that by cunning (the principles they work by for they are all males) which strength could not effect. Wherefore as Parish churches were built along the Sea coast they built a sett of Meeting Houses quite back behind in the interior parts, Imitating the French—who by making a chain of Forts from Canada to Louisiana endeavour'd to circumscribe the English & prevent the extension of their trade. So did the Presbyterians with our Church. If they could not *suppress* they would *cramp* the progress of the Liturgy and church established—and accordingly did erect Meeting Houses as aforesaid. None of the Church opposed them and the Almighty by taking these people in their Craft have suffered them to fall into the Nett they spread for others. For the Anabaptists of Pennsylvania resolving themselves into a body & determined to settle their principles in every vacant quarter began to establish Meeting Houses also on the Borders. And by their address and assiduity have wormed the Presbyterians out of all their strongholds & drove them away. So that the Baptists are now the most numerous and formidable body of people which the church has to encounter with in the interior and back parts of the Province & the antipathy the two Sects bear each other is astonishing.

"Wherefore a Presbyterian would sooner marry ten of his children to members of the Church of England than one to a Baptist. The same from the Baptists as to Presbyterians—their rancour is surprising—but the Church reaps great good by it and through their jealousies gains ground on them very fast. But the Baptists have great prevalence & footing in North Carolina & have taken such deep root there that it will require long time and pains to grub up their layers."

## XIV

## THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS SUPREMACY

At this point in my narrative it becomes necessary to discuss the struggle for supremacy in North Carolina between those who fostered the religious ideals of the Establishment and the Dissenters, especially the Baptists. This struggle became at this time more open and pronounced than it had been before, owing first to the activity of the Separate Baptists and again to the activity of Governor Tryon in promoting the interests of the Establishment. It seemed that all except the eastern counties were going after the dissenting ministers. The western settlers, most of whom were Dissenters, were beginning to demand equality in matters of religion and to manifest resentment against those of the Established church who taxed them for the support of a ministry of another denomination than their own. On the other hand, Governor Tryon, aroused by the activities of the Separate Baptist preachers, entered upon a vigorous promotion of the interests of the Establishment by which he hoped to rout dissent from the Province. In this work he had the hearty support of the eastern North Carolina leaders, especially those of his Council, all of whom were members of the Church of England, and who joined with him in getting such legislation as would best promote the interests of the Establishment and confound the Dissenters. In this way the struggle became somewhat sectional with Tryon and his influential counselors in the east, and with those appointed from among them as county officers in the west, supporting the Establishment, while the great body of the western settlers were demanding religious as well as political equality and justice. In one sense it was a struggle between aristocracy and democracy, with the friends of the Establishment seeking to impose on the people the support of a religion not of their own choosing, while on the other the democratic western settlers claimed the right to choose what minister and church they would support. And this whole struggle was embittered and intensified by the intolerance manifested not only by Tryon but also by most of his active supporters towards those who had political and religious ideals more democratic than their own. For in this final struggle for democracy in Provincial North Carolina matters political and religious were so interrelated that little distinction can be made between them. The settlers of Piedmont North Carolina were democratic to begin with, but we must either deny all influence to the preaching of democratic and individualistic ideas in religion, or we must admit that the preaching of Stearns and his fellow laborers quickened the spirit of democracy among their hearers and emboldened them to make that resistance to oppression which resulted in the Regulator movement. It has been said that this movement was not a religious war. In one sense this is very true. Men of all sects were Regulators, and in general it seems that the Baptist leaders as well as the Quakers and Presbyterians advised against armed resistance and turbulence. But it would be hard to deny in consideration of such facts as I shall give below that Governor Tryon's bitterness against the Baptists as a sect which he did not believe should be tolerated made him the more energetic in his measures to suppress the Regulators, whom he supposed to be made up largely of Baptists. Nor was it accidental that no Baptist community sent soldiers to the aid of Tryon, while after the failure of the Regulation it was especially the Baptist populations that more than any others left the Province, seeking elsewhere the freedom which they despaired of finding here. Accordingly, I have not omitted some account of the Regulator movement in what follows.

We have seen that the rapid increase of the Baptists was observed and deprecated by Governor Dobbs, who called their preachers "strollers," and supposed that some of them led immoral lives.[1] Towards the close of his administration notwithstanding his diligence in urging the Assembly to provide for the clergy he laments that there were not more than six ministers in the Province, two of whom did "not behave as clergymen ought," while there were few or no schools for the education of youth and only a few lay readers to serve the chapels erected by the several counties. To this lack of ministers and teachers he attributed the sloth, indolence and immoralities of the people and the rise of "numerous sectaries of all denominations except Papists, having many strollers, particularly Anabaptists, or dippers, there being so few qualified to give regular baptism."[2] At least one of the Episcopal clergymen whom Governor Dobbs regarded unfavorably heartily reciprocated his opinion saying that he had "a most contemptible opinion both of his [Dobbs'] morals and politics" and declaring that so far as he could learn "the news of his death was received with the greatest joy throughout the Province."[3] But the doughty Irish Governor was generally regarded by the clergymen as "a great patron of religion."[4]

Governor Tryon was to prove much more active and energetic in his efforts to promote the Establishment than any of his predecessors. He had come to North Carolina as Lieutenant Governor late in the year 1764, and had succeeded Governor Dobbs at his death on March 28, 1765. He made the better establishment of the Church in the Province one of the main objects of his administration—perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say the main object. The Bishop of London, as we know now, had granted him full power and authority while he should be Governor, and as far as the laws of the Province would admit he exercised this power and authority like a true bishop of the Church of England. The clergy were under his appointment, supervision, disciplining, and inspection. If we keep this in mind we shall better be able to understand why Tryon was so violent in his opposition to every sect and movement that might interfere with his cherished purpose for the Establishment.[5]

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[1] A characteristic expression of Dobbs is this, *Colonial Records,* VI, 223: "Having only strollers who set up for teachers without any regular instruction, and many of them immoral livers."

[2] *Colonial Records,* VI, 1039f.

[3] *Colonial Records,* VI, 7, opinion of Mr. Moir.

[4] *Colonial Records,* VI, 7, opinion of Mr. Earl.

That on taking up the administration Tryon regarded the situation really alarming for the Establishment may be seen from his message to the Assembly on May 3, 1765, in which he made a strong appeal to the Assemblymen who belonged to the Church of England to come to the rescue. If they longer neglected to stand for their church, he warned them, there was little prospect of its ever being properly established in North Carolina. The increasing numbers of the different sectaries, if unchecked would, he said, in a few years have control of all public assemblies.[6] The Assembly made prompt response and passed an Act for Establishment sponsored by the infamous Francis Corbin, one of Granville's agents, whose land frauds had exhausted the patience of the people. This met the approval of the Bishop of London and became the law of the Province.

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[5] The truth of the above statements is patent to every one who reads Tryon's own account of his administration as found in his letters in the *Colonial Records*. And Rev. James Reed of New Bern in a letter of July 2, 1771, has told the same tale. He says: "On Saturday last our worthy Governor took leave of the Province, and sailed from hence to the Government of New York. By this removal the clergy have lost a powerful advocate and a very sincere friend, and as the Bishop of London has granted him full power and authority over the clergy, during his residence amongst us, I thought it needless to write the Society, so long as I had the happiness of living under his immediate notice and inspection, being very sensible that his Excellency would not fail to acquaint both the Bishop of London and the venerable Society with everything material to the clergy and the Establishment of the church of England in these parts." *Colonial Records*, IX, 5f.

[6] *Colonial Records*, VII, 41f.

In one important respect, however, this Act did not please the Bishop of London, and was not as recommended by Tryon, in that it provided that the ministers should be paid not from the general treasury of the Province but from taxes levied by each Vestry for itself. What made it tolerable to the Churchmen both in the Province and England was that it no longer left to the vestries the choice of clergymen for the various parishes but being silent on this matter left the right of presentation to be claimed by the Crown, or in practice, Governor Tryon as its representative. But this was a claim stoutly resisted by many vestries which makes it evident that omission in the Act to indicate who had the right of presentation was due to sharp practices of Tryon and his friends.[7]

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[7] Among the vestries which still claimed the right of choosing their own minister was St. Philip's, Brunswick County. Rev. Mr. Barnett, whom Tryon had insisted on installing as minister in that Parish, found that its people were violently opposed to his induction in a way contrary to their wishes; his situation became most disagreeable and was relieved only by his removal to St. George's Parish, Northampton County. *Colonial Records,* VII, 789. The next minister whom Tryon proposed to induct in this county, Mr. Cramp, declared that the people would starve him, "for none like an inducted minister" (*Colonial Records,* VIII, 13). The vestry of St. James' Parish, New Hanover, flatly refused to induct Mr. Wills on Tryon's presentation, claiming that, while they found Mr. Wills a worthy man, yet the right of choosing their minister was vested in themselves (*Ibid.,* 199). In this instance the Governor found it well not to insist on his right (*Ibid.,* 220). The vestry of Pasquotank accepted Mr Fiske on Tryon's presentation but before long made the unfortunate minister feel the full force of their resentment and obliged him to leave his Parish, to the great indignation of Tryon, who wrote of the "ungenteel and cruel treatment he had received from his parishioners," and recommended that the minister sue the wardens and vestry for his salary (*Ibid.,* 14). The court records show that Fiske's widow, in 1772, sued for 751£ 13s 4d. Rev. Theodorus Swaine Drage, whom Tryon sent to Salisbury found that the people knew how to elect a vestry who by one trick after another checkmated all his attempts to have them provide for the Establishment according to the purpose of the Vestry Act, and who finally expelled him from the Parish (*Ibid.,* 179 &c., IX, 622).

Tryon's own words show that he had no better claim to the right of presentation of ministers than the omission of reference to the method of choosing ministers in the Vestry Act.[8] And had he not pushed the clause for induction in his first session of Assembly, said Rev. Alexander Stewart of Bath, when the people were somewhat complaisant, it is more than probable that it would never have been granted. The same minister is authority for the statement that the vestries found many ways of rendering the provisions of the Act nugatory: some refused the Governor's clerks (clergymen); in some parishes the vestries refused to qualify; in others there was no sheriff or other tax collector.[9] In fact, Tryon soon saw that he could not depend on the parishes to provide for the support of the ministers as contemplated in the Act, even when its enforcement was in his own energetic hands. The sectaries were so numerous and the remainder of the inhabitants were so neglectful of religion, that the Act was regarded with uneasiness and mistrust.[10] As he had failed to induce the Assembly to adopt his recommendation that the ministers be paid out of the general treasury, he soon found that the vestries, who alone could levy the parish taxes and pay the ministers, had the whip hand and knew how to use it. The Governor had to be most politic to get them to do as much as tolerate the ministers he sent among them, much less levy taxes for their support. "The establishment of a minister," he wrote, "dependent on the caprice of a vestry is too precarious a device for the option of any man of real merit."[11] Hence, he used all his powers of persuasion, which were not small, with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel begging that it provide stipends for those ministers he might choose for the North Carolina parishes. The Society heard his plea and was generous in making provision. Tryon himself became a contributing member of the Society and by many letters outlining his own activities and the progress of the Church in the Province whetted the interest of the officials of the Society in London. In two years he had located seven ministers in addition to the five he found in North Carolina on his coming, and before the end of his five years as Governor he had ministers in eighteen of the thirty-two parishes of the Province, though it seems that not more than half of them were receiving regular support from the vestries or found permanent residence in their parishes.

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[8] *Colonial Records,* VII, 490. "As no provision is made by the Act for the presentation of the minister it devolves to the crown and is delegated to the Governor for the time being by his Majesty's instruction."

[9] *Colonial Records,* VII, 494.

[10] *Colonial Records,* VII, 13.

[11] *Colonial Records,* VII, 456.

His energetic and zealous manner of promoting the interest of the Church soon won for him great respect from the ministers he had appointed to parishes and they were warm in their expression of praise of their friend. In their eyes he was "the patron and friend, the nursing father of the Church."[12]

Believing that the Establishment in North Carolina had been brought into much disrepute by the delinquencies in character of some of the parish ministers, Tryon made it his purpose to recommend only such ministers as were "as exemplary in their lives as orthodox in their doctrine." He exercised sharp surveillance over them after they had been located, assuming many of the functions of a bishop, and in consequence being so regarded by the clergymen who owed their appointments to him, while any minister who did not conform to his standards or who failed to recognize his overseership was visited with his displeasure.[13]

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[12] Mr. Morton of Northampton County wrote: "that amiable and good man, Governor Tryon, who may be justly called the Nursing Father of the Church" (*Colonial Records,* VII, 425). Rev. John Barnett said: "Our Governor . . . is one of the worthiest of men and has the interest of religion much at heart" (*Colonial Records,* VII, 150). . . . Mr. Moir was as warm in his words of praise. But it remained for Rev. George Micklejohn, who proved a johnny-on-the-spot on all occasions, now a Tory and again a patriot, to lay the praise of Tryon on thick. Tryon, he said, "is by his inclination as well as by his office, the defender and friend, the patron and nursing father of the Church established amongst us—he is a Religious Frequenter of its Worship and a steady adherant to its interests and is prepared in the Times of greatest danger and distress to suffer with and for it" (*Colonial Records,* VII, 520).

At first, as we have seen, Tryon entertained the hope that with a sufficient number of approved ministers the larger number of every sect would come over to the Church of England.[14] In 1767 he reported that the advocates of the Established Church were already a majority and that there was a regular drift of the inhabitants into the fold.[15] It was not owing to any lack of activity on his part that his expectation was not realized, as the following account will show.

On assuming the Government in 1765 Governor Tryon found five churches either built or in process of construction; those at Brunswick and Wilmington were incomplete; those at Edenton and Bath needed repairs; only that at New Bern was in good condition. He found also five ministers of the Church of England in the Province. These were Rev. James Reed of Christ Church Parish, Craven County; Rev. Alexander Stewart of St. Thomas Parish, Bath, Beaufort County; Rev. Daniel Earl of St. Paul's Parish, Chowan County; Rev. Thomas Burgess of Edgecombe Parish, Halifax County; and Rev. James Moir, resident in Edgecombe County, an itinerant minister and not installed in any parish. Of these Reed and Stewart conformed to the new Vestry Act by accepting Presentation by the Governor, but Earl never made such application, while Burgess having been given a legal claim to support by a special Act of Assembly did not disturb that arrangement. As for Moir, Tryon sought to have him given a parish, for he did not think that the Province received any benefit from him as an itinerant missionary; "for under that general license of preaching everywhere, he seldom preaches anywhere."[16] But this purpose was frustrated by the death of Moir in February, 1767.

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[13] See his letter to the Society on Mr. Stephens who sought ordination without Tryon's recommendation. *Colonial Records*, VII, 261. Mr. Cosgreve in some way failed to measure up to his standard, possibly morally.

[14] *Colonial Records*, VI, 102.

[15] *Colonial Records*, VII, 548.

Of the other ministers mentioned above, Stewart, a faithful and worthy man, continued his labors until the spring of 1771, when after several years of ill health he died, leaving "a widow and four children, and his affairs in great confusion."[17] Mr. Reed showed much zeal in support of his church against the Dissenters and was a warm friend of Tryon. His character is revealed in the best light in the support he gave Mr. Tomlinson, the Head Master of the New Bern School who, for all Mr. Reed could do, was finally driven from his place by the arbitrary and unjust action of a board of directors.[18] Another side of Mr. Reed's character is revealed by Mr. Stewart, who described him as "a parsimonious saving man and without children."[19] He continued to serve the Parish until 1775, when, in consequence of his refusal to officiate at a service under the auspices of the Patriots, the Committee of Safety ordered the Vestry to discharge him. Though after a few months he began to serve the church again, he left the Parish when hostilities began.[20] Mr. Earl of Chowan was a resident of the Province before he became a minister. He served his parish from before 1760 until the Revolutionary War, being very cautious not to offend his parishioners, "never introducing anything into the pulpit except exhortations and prayers for peace, good order, and a speedy reconciliation with Great Britain."[21] According to Rev. John Alexander, Earl was suspicious, selfish and unbrotherly in his treatment of him, and also covetous, refusing to baptize children unless paid.[22] Of Rev. Thomas Burgess, Senior, we have little information. His ministry did not last beyond the provincial period.

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[16] *Colonial Records,* VII, 102.

[17] *Colonial Records,* IX, 7.

[18] *Colonial Records,* IX, 338ff.

[19] *Colonial Records,* VII, 493.

[20] *Colonial Records,* X, 238, 115f., 428.

[21] *Colonial Records,* X, 237f.

[22] *Colonial Records,* IX, 21f.

As there were thirty-two parishes in the Province, Tryon found that he would need twenty-seven additional clergymen to locate one in each parish, which number he thought would be scarce sufficient to perform the marriage and burial services. It was no little energy and ability that he displayed in seeking to provide these clergymen, and his success was surprisingly great.

The first pastor to arrive after the passage of the new Vestry Act was Rev. John Barnett, in October, 1765. Being highly recommended by the Society he was received into the Governor's home, and afterwards located in the Parish of St. Philip, Brunswick County. Here he remained until 1768 but in some way was unsatisfactory to his parishioners, who refused to accept him on the Governor's presentation. On this account he went to St. George's Parish, Northampton County, where he was duly installed by Tryon as minister in 1769. Here, he failed to sustain the reputation for good behavior which the Society gave him on his coming to the Province, and according to Rev. C. E. Taylor, who succeeded him, "fled into Virginia, being charged with crimes too base to be mentioned."[23] This Mr. Taylor, it may be said, proved a very worthy man, and did successful work for his church from his assumption of his ministry in 1771. From the first he espoused the Patriot cause and was chairman of the Safety Committee of Northampton County.[24] Before Mr. Barnett, Rev. Andrew Morton, had, on the advice of Tryon, come to Northampton in the summer of 1766. He was well received by the people, and was doing a successful work. But after a year he was forced to leave on account of ill health.[25]

Other ministers who were on Tryon's recommendation located in parishes were George Micklejohn, St. Matthews

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[23] *Colonial Records,* IX, 21.

[24] *Colonial Records,* X, 140.

[25] *Colonial Records,* VII, 252, 520.

Parish, Orange County, (1766 or 1767); Samuel Fiske, St. John's Parish, Pasquotank County, (1767), who was ill treated by his parishioners and left after a short time; James McCartney, Granville Parish and County, Assistant in Mr. Tomlinson School, who in 1768 went to England for ordination; Mr. Cramp, St. Philip's Parish, Brunswick County, (1769); Hobart Briggs, St. Gabriel's Parish Duplin County (1769); Mr. Alexander, St. Barnabas Parish, Hertford County, (1769); Thomas Burgess, Jr., St. Mary's Parish, Edgecombe County, (1769); Charles Cupples, St. John's Parish, Bute County, (1768); John Wills, St. James Parish, New Hanover County, (1769-70); Mr. Miller, St. Patrick's Parish, Dobbs County, (1770); Edward Jones, St. Stephens Parish, Johnston County, (1770); Mr. Johnston, Society Parish, Bertie County, (1770); Theodorus S. Drage, St. Luke's Parish, Rowan County, (1770).

In addition to these Rev. James Cosgreve coming to the Province in 1766 with credentials which Tryon regarded as unsatisfactory, was sent to Pitt for three month's probation, since Tryon deemed such probation necessary and in the interest of the cause of religion, "the inhabitants seeming as jealous of any restraint put on their consciences as they have of late shewn for that on their property." But Mr. Cosgreve failed. In March, 1769, Tryon reported that he had left the Province and he hoped he would never return, for he was "a scandal and a disgrace to his order."[26] Already Tryon had hope that his purpose as expressed in the Vestry Act which he sponsored, "the first regular and certain Establishment of the Church in the Province," would be realized, and that the would see a minister in every one of the thirty-two parishes of the Province, ministering to contented parishioners who paid their parish dues cheerfully and thus made it possible for the vestry to pay his stipulated salary and provide the glebe of two hundred acres with well kept mansion house and outbuildings as provided by law. With good salaries for ministers and other income from the glebe lands and the perquisites from marriages and funerals, which were to come to the ministers alone, he saw the future bright for the Establishment.

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[26] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 20; VII, 261.

That Tryon's vigorous conduct of church affairs aroused some enthusiasm is shown by the fact that several young men of the Province went at this time to England for ordination by the Bishop of London. One of these was Mr. James McCartney, who had been Assistant in the New Bern School; another was a Mr. Blinn, strongly recommended by both Tryon and Mr. Stewart; another Edward Jones who returned and became minister in Johnston County; another Mr. Johnston, later minister in Bertie; and still another Thomas Burgess, son of the minister of Halifax, who became minister in Edgecombe. In addition to these, a Mr. Stevens, a Scotch Presbyterian, went for orders without the Governor's recommendation, and was followed with a most unfavorable report from Mr. Barnett.[27] When he afterwards presented his credentials signed by the Bishop of London, Tryon believed them a forgery.

But Tryon soon found that his enthusiasm was not justified by conditions. Some of the parishes were too poor to support a minister; in others there was general neglect of religion.[28] And he began to realize that it was the numbers and aggressiveness of the Sectaries, especially the Baptists and Presbyterians, that stood in the way of the progress of his Church. In July, 1766, Mr. Morton, coming to Brunswick and intending to go to Mecklenburg, heard such stories of the cold reception that awaited him there from Dissenters of various denominations and particularly "Covenanters Seceders, Anabaptists and New Lights," that he was quite discouraged and went no further but took a new field in Northampton County.[29]

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[27] *Colonial Records,* VII, 182.

[28] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 13, VII, 540.

Several of the ministers whom Tryon had located in parishes soon left them for one reason or another. Mr. McCartney left Granville soon after Tryon's departure from the Province, having probably rendered himself unacceptable to the inhabitants by serving as Chaplain in Tryon's militia in the Regulator troubles. Mr. Hobart Briggs also soon left Duplin, probably for a like reason. In a few years Mr. Drage was expelled from St. Luke's Parish by his vestry.[30] Their places were not supplied. During Governor Martin's administration nothing was done about church affairs, and he thought it would not be good policy to augment the number of ministers. But two or three new missionaries came to the Province during the years 1771-75. One of these, Rev. Nicholas Christian, succeeded Rev. Mr. Cramp in the parish of St. Philip, Brunswick County. He was a young person just setting out in life. Having very little to support him he found it very difficult to live on the trifling "surplice fees" with no support from the vestry. He performed divine service at five different places, which were Brunswick, Lockwood's Folly, Norwest, Boundary and Waccamaw, reaching the last by very bad roads and across deep swamps. There were at Waccamaw thirty families widely scattered; the people were ignorant and before Mr. Christian's ministrations without religious instruction; among the children he baptized were many seven or eight years old. Only at much expense, for which he had no provision, and with great fatigue, could he traverse the great distances to his appointments. But like a true soldier of the Cross this youthful minister says in the last sentence of his only letter from his mission: "As for my part I shall use every effort in my power to propagate the true gospel of Christ to the glory of my Creator and the honor of so worthy a Society."[31] On May 20, 1775, Rev. Charles Pettigrew, after having gone to London and received ordination, returned to Edenton as a missionary of the Society, and began his ministerial labors in Chowan and Perquimans.[32] A native of Pennsylvania he had been educated in the school of Rev. Henry Patillo, and later had taught in Bute County. In 1773 he had been made principal of the academy at Edenton which had been recently chartered by the Assembly. As a minister he was first an assistant of Mr. Earl, a relationship which he sustained for some years. Before 1785 he was the regular minister. Both he and Mr. Earl are said to have been friendly to the patriot cause, but owing to their connection with the Church of England they were regarded with suspicion, and on this account were unable to accomplish much in their pastorate during the Revolution.[33]

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[29] *Colonial Records*, VII, 1f.

[30] *Colonial Records*, IX, 622.

Mr. Pettigrew was the last of the missionaries of the Society to come to North Carolina. After three-quarters of a century of effort the Established Church in the Province was to end in utter failure. All the vestry acts in its behalf, all the injustice done under form of law to Quakers and other Dissenters, all the persecutions to which the Baptists had been subjected at New Bern, in Pamlico and Beaufort, and in Bertie, had failed to win favor for it. Tryon's energetic measures to strangle dissent and make the Church of England dominant proved futile; even the members of his own church resented the arbitrary measures by which he sought to impose ministers of his appointing on the parishes, while the Dissenters of the Province regarded his efforts to promote the Establishment at their expense as a part of oppressions against which they were beginning to rebel. Before Tryon left North Carolina they were chafing at parish taxes and petitioning to be relieved of them, declaring "that every one ought to pay his own clergy," and were boldly saying that "as they had opposed England in endeavoring to intrude on their civil rights, they also shall, and have a right to oppose any intrusion on their religious rights." With the fall of the English rule in North Carolina in the civil government came also the fall and practical suspension of activity of the Church of England. The long struggle for religious supremacy in behalf of the Establishment, in which Tryon had made the supreme effort, failed. Before his departure he was maddened to see some of the ministers whom he had installed forced to leave their parishes. Before the opening of the Revolution nearly all had gone, and, in the words of an able Episcopal writer, for a period of fifty years beginning at this time, "the Episcopal Church was in a parlous and evanescent condition in the entire province and state."[34]

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[31] *Colonial Records*, IX, 1022f.

[32] *Colonial Records*, X, 496.

[33] The church building in Edenton was neglected and in 1785 was in such bad repair that Bishop Coke preferred to preach in the courthouse. At this time Mr. Pettigrew seems to have had full charge but not to be succeeding with his work. With reference to him Bishop Coke said, "I suppose Mr. Pettigrew does as much good in Edenton as a little chicken." Quoted in Grissom, *Methodism in North Carolina*, 164. But this criticism seems to be too severe. Mr. Pettigrew was an excellent teacher and a kindly man, and was later elected bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of North Carolina, though never consecrated. See Sketch by Marshall DeLancey Haywood, *Biog. Hist. of N. C.*, VI, 396f.

To return now to the Baptists. It was against them of all Dissenters that Tryon felt the bitterest enmity. He had been here only a few months when he wrote scornfully of them as "Superior New Lights from New England."[35] Four years later maddened by the treatment Rev. Mr. Fiske had received in Pasquotank he declared that the Baptists were "the avowed enemies of mother church," and excepted Baptists from the list of Sectaries who could in his view in any way be tolerated, ranking them as "enemies to society and a scandal to common sense."[36] In many of the parishes the ministers of his appointing were making distressing reports of the numbers, activity, bigotry, and ignorance of the Baptists and telling of how they were frustrating their plans. Perhaps this will partly explain why the ill will that Tryon conceived for the Baptists on his first becoming acquainted with them should have been so much intensified as he found they were not confined chiefly to the maritime counties as he had supposed, but were even more numerous further west. It was not long, of course, until this attitude on Tryon's part became known to the Baptists themselves. The consequence was that every community in North Carolina where Baptists were present in considerable numbers soon came to regard Tryon and his entire administration as avowed enemies ready to deprive them of every civil and religious right. We shall see soon how many of them despairing of relief from oppression here in this government went to other provinces.

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[34] Henderson, *The History of St. Luke's Parish,* 19. Though nearly all the ministers of the Church of England left the Province at the opening of the Revolution, several remained and espoused the patriots' cause. These were Revs. Charles E. Taylor of Northampton, Charles Cupples of Bute, and John Alexander of Hertford. In addition to these, Parson Gurley, who seems to have been assigned to no parish but whose home was in the Albemarle region, was an ardent patriot. Both he and Mr. Alexander continued in charge of their flocks during the Revolutionary period and left each a numerous and honorable posterity. (J. W. Moore, MS. History of North Carolina Baptists.)

[35] *Colonial Records,* VII, 102.

In one very important matter the Governor and his Council and the Assembly made discrimination against the Baptists. This was the marriage laws. By the Act of 1741 the right to officiate at marriages was confined to ministers of the Church of England and in those parishes where no minister was settled to justices of the peace. Each of the couple desiring to marry was required to give a bond with the Clerk of the Court in the sum of fifty pounds that there was no legal obstruction to the marriage; then they might be married either by securing a license or on the publication of banns in accord with the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer. Some of the Baptist preachers, notably William Burges and John Burges of Camden and John Thomas of Edgecombe (Toisnot), became justices of the peace and were thus able to perform a legal marriage. It is to be observed that the fees for marriage were considerable, in all about what would be ten dollars in our money, one-half of which went to the Governor and about five shillings to the officiating minister. This will partly explain why the right of officiating at marriages was confined to the ministers of the Established Church.

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[36] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 13f.

When Tryon became Governor the marriage law of 1741 was still in force. But with ministers of the Establishment residing in only four or five of the eastern counties, it is evident that they could officiate at only a small part of the great number of marriages in the Province. The Quakers indeed though not specifically authorized to do so in the Act had all along been marrying in accord with the custom of their church. They had not been disturbed and they were not disturbed in their practice during the entire colonial period.[37]

After the counties to the west began to be filled with settlers, Presbyterian ministers, whether regularly installed or visitors serving as occasional pastors, had officiated without question at marriages, seemingly for the most part after the publication of banns, rather than by license.[38] In those counties where Presbyterians formed the more respectable part of the population the justices were nearly all of that faith and had the legal right to marry.[39] That such marriages by Dissenting ministers whether Presbyterians or others had become general is recognized and rebuked as disorderly in the Marriage Act of 1766, but by the same Act all such marriages already performed were declared valid. By the terms of the Act, under heavy penalties all Dissenting ministers except Presbyterians were forbidden to continue to officiate at marriages. Presbyterians under the guise of being shown a special favor were robbed of almost all the rights of marriage which they had believed themselves free to exercise and which they had therefore exercised, marrying according to the Westminster Confession. Under the provisions of the Act of 1766 they could no longer marry on the publication of banns, but were allowed to marry by license provided the fee should be collected and turned over to the minister of the Establishment installed in the Parish. Tryon as an ardent vice-bishop of the Church seemed to think that the Presbyterian ministers were shown a great favor in thus being permitted to become collectors of marriage fees for the Established clergy and apologized for such liberality to them in his letter to the Earl of Shelburn. The Presbyterians, however, of all ranks, both lay and clerical, were not slow to realize the wrong and indignity which their ministers and church had been done in putting this common and sacred rite in the hands of Episcopal ministers alone. When after a few years they had recovered from the stunning blow they began to petition Tryon and the Assembly for a change in the Marriage Act. One of these petitions was that from Tryon County.[40] The Presbyterian petitioners resent the statement in the preamble of the Act of 1766 that they had married fraudulently and illegally. They declare, as other petitioners declared several years later, that this statement was altogether false. They ask that Presbyterian ministers be restored to their former privileges, claiming that it was "a privilege which a million of our fellow professors in America now enjoy, whose ancestors have enjoyed ever since they settled on this continent neither was it ever taken from dissenters in America until it was taken from us by this act of which we now complain." This resentment continued to burn in the hearts of North Carolina Presbyterians and again found expression in the administration of Governor Martin, when in another petition they made the same complaint, and declared because of the indignity thus placed on their church Presbyterian ministers refused to settle in the Province, while even those already settled were leaving for other Provinces often taking with them many of their persuasion.[41] And it is not too much to say that this resentment found further expression in the Mecklenburg Resolves of May, 1775, and in that uncompromising hostility to British arms that won for the settlement near Sugar Creek the appellation of "Hornet's Nest."

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[37] Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery,* p. 169, says: "They married after their own fashion but without the consent of the Government and therefore illegally until the passage of the law of 1778." Mr. Weeks forgot the ordinance of Convention of December, 1776, authorizing ministers of all denominations to marry. In the Act of 1778 recognition is made of the fact that the Quakers had all along been undisturbed in marrying according to their own custom.

[38] See the petition of the Presbyterians of Tryon County, *Colonial Records,* VIII, 80b.

[39] Letter of Tryon to Shelburn, *Colonial Records,* VII, 432.

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[40] First printed in the *University Magazine,* Vol. IX; reprint, *Colonial Records,* VIII, 80b.

Governor Tryon, however, and his friends did make a show—and that it was only a show will soon appear—of being concerned about the complaints of the Presbyterians. In the summer of 1768, during the Regulator troubles, certain Presbyterian divines had addressed their people urging them to trust Tryon to correct the wrongs of which they were complaining, and Tryon had raised in the Presbyterian settlement the army he brought to Hillsboro in September of that year. For this Tryon was very grateful, and was inclined to befriend the Presbyterians since they had so signally befriended him, and he still had need of their friendship. But the favor asked by the Presbyterians was great, nothing else than the restoration of their privileges in the matter of marriage laws. Yet, Tryon despite his reluctance and consternation had to make some response. Accordingly, in the Assembly of 1770-71 Edmund Fanning, his most ardent supporter, sponsored a bill to give the Presbyterians what they sought. After many conferences between the Lower House and the Council the bill finally passed, but with a suspending clause until the will of the Crown could be learned. Even so much could not have been wrung from the unwilling Council had not the Presbyterians and their friends had a majority in the Lower House and threatened to block all legislation until the bill favoring them was passed. In transmitting the Act Tryon wrote a letter the general tone of which was that the Act should be disallowed, though he did ask in so many words that it be allowed, "if it is not thought too much to interfere with and check the growth of the Church of England. I am sensible the attachment the Presbyterians have shown the Government merits the indulgence of this Act."[42]

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[41] *Colonial Records*, IX, 623f.

Thus Tryon was forced to present a law which he evidently detested, taking pains to point out that it had many objections and would probably check the growth of the Church he was seeking to foster. But if Tryon had to be politic in his language so as not to offend the Presbyterians, at least two of the ministers of the Church under his nursing care in North Carolina felt no such necessity. Hardly had the Act passed the Assembly when Mr. Drage of Rowan wrote to the Secretary declaring the Act was aimed at the Constitution, was contrary to the original and subsequent charters, to many Acts of the Assembly and the Instructions of the Governor.[43] On July 2, 1771, after the Regulators had been defeated, Mr. Reed of New Bern, who was on the most intimate terms with Tryon, wrote a letter to the Secretary which reveals unmistakably the fact that Tryon and his friends had been playing the Presbyterians false. So long as thoughts of turbulent Regulators troubled their dreams they were ready to fawn upon the Presbyterians; but when once the wronged Regulators had been defeated and the ministers of the Establishment had duly returned thanks to God in their churches for the success of Tryon's arms, then they showed their teeth. Mr. Reed in his report to the Society made no attempt to conceal the fact that such had been the attitude of the Churchmen, declaring that "it was good policy to keep the Dissenters in good humor at such a critical juncture."[44]

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[42] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 527.

[43] See his letter, *Colonial Records,* VIII, 504f. This letter repeats in substance what Tryon had written to Drage a few months earlier, *Colonial Records,* VIII, 203. In addition it seems that Mr. Drage was well informed as to the Instructions to Governor Tryon, and that his letter was inspired by him.

The letters of both Mr. Drage and Mr. Reed reflect the views of Tryon and were in all probability written at his suggestion. Certainly Mr. Reed as pastor of the New Bern church was constantly in the Governor's counsel and regarded him as his spiritual superior. It is strange that after all Tryon's false dealings, of which his double dealing with the Presbyterians is an instance, he should have found an apologist in North Carolina.[45]

But it was the Presbyterians alone whom Tryon made any pretense of favoring in the Marriage Act of 1766 or the disallowed Act of 1771. The Baptists were purposely and harshly forbidden to perform the marriage ceremony at all. In his letter to the Earl of Shelburn in which he discusses the Marriage Act of 1766, Tryon unmistakably shows that it was against such "enemies of mother church" as the Baptists that the Act was especially directed.[46]

It must not, however, be supposed that the Baptists tamely acquiesced in the restrictions placed upon their ministers by the Marriage Act of 1766. The language of that Act suggests that like the Presbyterians Baptist ministers had been officiating at marriages. Some of them, more especially those to the West, continued this practice even after the passage of the Act of 1766. As late as February 28, 1771, Rev. Mr. Drage of Salisbury complained that the "Anabaptists" married by their own justices and itinerant preachers, bidding him defiance and paying no marriage fees.[47]

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[44] *Colonial Records,* IX, 6. Letter of July 2, 1771: "On Saturday last our worthy Governor took leave of the Province, and sailed from hence to the Government of New York." And in explanation of why the bill in favor of the Presbyterians had been allowed to pass: "Upon the fate of this other Bills were dependent, and it was good policy to keep the Dissenters in as good humour as possible at such a critical juncture. Should this Act receive the Royal assent, it would be a fatal stroke at the church of England, but as the insurrection is entirely quelled I flatter myself with hopes the Act will meet with a repulse."

[45] The reference is to Marshall DeLancey Haywood, whose book, *Governor Tryon of North Carolina,* seeks to counteract the just odium in which Tryon's name is held.

[46] *Colonial Records,* VII, 432. Tryon says: "Another tendency of this Act was to prevent the frequent abuses by rascally fellows who travelled through the province under the title of ministers of the Presbyterians and other sectaries and who being beggars in conscience as well as in circumstances sought all opportunities to perform that sacred office to the great prejudice of the country."

And why should Baptist ministers not have officiated at marriages? Even in the darkest days of the Restoration period in England the Baptists had married their own members. On April 22, 1672, Benjamin Keach, a Baptist minister, and Susanna Partridge were married by Rev. Hansard Knollys, a famous Baptist preacher of London. The records in Baptist church books show that such marriages were common in England both before and after the passage of the Toleration Act of 1689. As told in *Rippon's Register*, III, 452, the Baptists in these early days were under the necessity of marrying their own members because some of the ministers of the Established Church refused to perform the ceremony for Baptists at all and others would perform it only in conformity with the ceremony of the service book. The ceremony used by Baptists in 1689 is thus indicated by Rev. Thomas Grantham, a General Baptist:

> The parties to be married having qualified for that state of life, according to the law of God, and the law of the land, as to the degrees, &c. therein limited, they call together a competent number of their relations and friends; and, having usually some one of our ministry present with them, the parties concerned declare their contract formerly made between themselves, and the advice of their

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[47] *Colonial Records* VIII, 505. Bishop Cheshire, *Church History*, 80f., note, supposes that in the Act of 1766 the word "dissenters" is synonymous with "Presbyterians," and says that it occurs only in the Preamble, failing to observe that it occurs in the second article also. As a show of favor was made in this Act to Presbyterians alone Dissenters are not mentioned in articles eight and nine. Ashe, *History*, I, 383, 385f., adopts Cheshire's view.

> friends, if occasion require it; and then taking each other by the hand, declare, "That they from that day forward, during their natural lives together, do enter into the state of marriage," using the words of marriage in the service-book, acknowledging the words to be very fit for that purpose. And then a writing is signed by the parties married, to keep in memory the contract and covenant of their marriage.

In 1769 two petitions involving the grievances of the Regulators were presented to Governor Tryon and his Council and the General Assembly, one from the people of Orange and Rowan and the other from those of Anson, counties in which the Baptists were very numerous. Both of these papers asked that members of all denominations be given the same privileges in the matter of marriage.[48]

When next the Assembly met, the same Assembly that passed Johnston's bloody riot Act, and expelled Herman Husband, and passed the law disallowed by the Crown giving the Presbyterian members greater privileges in the matter of marriage, the petitions of the Regulators, coming from those communities where Baptists were much the most numerous denomination, were not forgot. Edmund Fanning introduced a bill also, "to empower dissenting ministers regularly called to any congregation to solemnize the rite of marriage." This was on December 22, 1770. After receiving some show of favor and passing its first reading and being sent to the Council this bill was summarily rejected on January 7, 1771.[49] The action of the Assembly in this matter shows how little Tryon was ready to make good his promise to the Regulators in his letter of April 13, 1768, that their resolution to petition the Legislature was extremely agreeable to him; and that when petition should be made, his services would not be wanting to redress any real grievances.[50] And it certainly does not speak well for the Presbyterians that in this Assembly they were concerned with privileges in this matter of marriage for themselves alone and allowed rejection of the bill to extend these privileges to all denominations of Christians.

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[48] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 78, 82. The petition of those from Orange and Rowan reads: "And may it please you to grant us a Repeal of the Act prohibiting Dissenting ministers from marrying according to the Decretal, Rites, and ceremonies of their Respective Churches, a privilege they were debarred in no other part of his Majesty's Dominions, and as we humbly conceive a privilege they stand entitled to by the Act of Toleration, and in fine a privilege granted even to the very Catholics in Ireland and the Protestants in France."

[49] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 297, 300, 332, 352.

Tryon had outwitted the Presbyterians and deceived them; he had scorned the Baptists. He had denied their rights to both denominations; in this way he thought he was strangling dissent from the Church of England. In his eyes there were no noble divines but those of his own church. Governor Martin saw the wrong, at least so far as the Presbyterians were concerned, but though he complained of it to the Crown he took no measures to correct it. Freedom for ministers of all denominations to marry came in North Carolina only when the bonds of English civil and religious tyranny had been broken.

This marriage question was by no means out of the minds of the people when they were taking measures for the establishment of an independent government. In the instructions to the Mecklenburg delegates to the Constitutional Congress at Halifax in November, 1776, under the head of Laws, the first two instructions were:

> 1. You shall endeavor to have all vestry laws and marriage acts heretofore in force totally and forever abolished.
>
> 2. You shall endeavor to obtain a law to prevent clandestine marriages, and that Gospel Ministers regularly ordained, whether by Bishops or Presbyteries or by Association of regular ministers, shall have legal authority to marry after due publication of banns where the parties live.

These instructions came from a Presbyterian settlement. Like instructions were given also to the delegates from Orange. But it seems that neither the Mecklenburg nor the Orange delegates remembered their instructions when they had got to Halifax. Possibly they supposed that they had no opportunity to obey them, for the Halifax Congress was hardly a law making body. It was concerned with making a constitution for the new State, in which was provided a Legislature which should make laws. In this situation it was a Baptist minister who knew what to do. He had already had an honorable part in framing the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. This was Rev. Henry Abbot, pastor of Pasquotank. Late in the session, on Sunday, December 22, 1776, he introduced a resolution which passed its final readings the same day, empowering the ministers of all denominations to perform the marriage ceremony. As passed it reads as follows:

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[50] *Colonial Records,* VII, 805.

> All regular ministers of the Gospel of every Denomination shall be empowered to celebrate matrimony, according to the rights and ceremonies of their respective churches.

The records show that the resolution was amended in some particulars after it was introduced, but it kept the main purpose. Although it was not till fifteen months later that the State Legislature, in April, 1778, passed the act that made more definite the rules under which marriages should be celebrated, henceforth the ministers of all denominations were free in this important matter. Those who had been oppressed under marriage laws of Tryon's contriving had passed to the glorious liberty of the sons of freedom.

It is commonly stated by writers on North Carolina history that the Provincial marriage laws remained in force until the passing of the statute in April, 1778.[51] But there is this further evidence that the hated laws were effectually repealed by the Convention resolution of 1776. At the first meeting of the Kehukee Association thereafter, in October, 1777, on motion of Rev. John Moore, minister of the church at the Falls of the Tar (Rocky Mount), a committee consisting of Mr. Moore, John Staned, John Thomas and Nathan Mayo, was appointed, which brought in "a plan for marriage in the Regular Baptist Society," which plan I am giving in the note below. It shows that the Provincial marriage law was for these Baptists already obsolete, as it doubtless was for all other people of the free State of North Carolina.[52]

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[51] Weeks, *Southern Qaukers and Slavery,* p. 169.

Some students of North Carolina history have expressed the opinion that the operation of the Schism Act tended greatly to retard the progress of Baptists and other Dissenters in Colonial North Carolina.[53] This was an Act of the English Parliament passed in 1714, the last year of

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[52] The persons intended to marry shall be properly published three Several Sundays in public congregation (or parish) in the County (or parish) where one or both the parties resides by the Minister (or clerk) of some regular Baptist Church having care of souls, and if the persons appear in order for marriage the Minister shall propose the following questions (or to the same import) whether they are free and clear from all preëngagement, and shall lay before them the danger and ill consequences of the falcefying of any former engagement, and shall inform or instruct them what the great end or design of the Ordinance or institution of Marriage and likewise instruct them in their duty to God and to each other, that they may live so as to answer the end and design of that ordinance and proceed as followeth (viz).

To the man N.—Wilt thou in the presence of God and this Congregation take this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy State of Marriage, to love, honor and Cherish in Sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her so long as you both shall live (the man shall answer) I will.

And then to the woman as followeth (viz)

N.—Wilt thou in the presence of God and this congregation take this man to be thy wedded husband to live together after God's ordinance in the holy State of marriage to love, honour and obey in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as you both shall live. The woman shall answer, I will.

Then the man shall say after the Minister as followeth (viz) I N.— take thee N.— to be my lawful and wedded wife to live together after God's ordinance in the holy State of marriage, to love, honor and Cherish in Sickness and health, in prosperity and adversity and forsaking all others keep me only unto thee so long as we both shall live and thereto I pledge thee my troth (then likewise the woman etc. . . . then joining their right hands together the Minister shall say. These whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. And shall pronounce them man and wife in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

[53] Weeks, *Church and State in North Carolina,* p. 51. "The most infamous section of all, the continued reënactment and enforcement of the

Queen Anne's reign, and took from Dissenters the right to educate their children.[54] Undertaking by such means to destroy the scholarship of all ministers except those of the Church of England it was hoped to eradicate dissent in religious matters. It was a process of intellectual starvation. All teachers of the schools were to be licensed by the bishop; they were required to promise to conform to the liturgy and take the sacrament at least once a year in the Church of England way. Teachers of elementary subjects, however, were exempt, and so were tutors in the houses of noblemen. Though this law was too barbarous for England and was repealed in 1718, yet when in 1732 the first royal Governor, Burrington, came to North Carolina, he like Johnston, Dobbs, and Tryon, and Martin, his successors, came with instructions to enforce the Schism Act, in these words:

> And we do further direct that no Schoolmaster be henceforth permitted to come from this Kingdom and to keep school in that our said Province without the license of the Bishop of London and that no other person now there or that shall come from other parts shall be admitted to keep school in North Carolina without your license first obtained.[55]

Though the purpose of the Crown and the Established Church to choke all forms of faith except their own was so persistently manifested, its effect for many years was limited to repressing voluntary efforts for schools on the part of the Dissenting inhabitants of the Province. It was not until the administration of Governor Tryon that the Schism Act was given sanction of enactment by the North

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Schism Act, which had been repealed in England in 1718. This act exasperated the Dissenters, throttled the few sickly schools that had begun to rise in the province, put a premium on the Establishment and on ignorance, separated the different denominations from each other, hindered free political discussion by keeping men ignorant of political matters, and is directly responsible for the large percentage of ignorance and for the backwardness in intellectual life so characteristic of the State today."

[54] *Encyc. Brit.*, 14th Ed., p. 852.

[55] *Colonial Records,* III, 111.

Carolina Assembly. In the Act of 1766, establishing the New Bern School, and the Act of 1770 for the Edenton School, it was "Provided always, That no person shall be admitted to be master of said school, but who is of the Established Church of England." This was interpreted to mean only the head master. In the meantime the Presbyterians were establishing high schools in their settlements, and even in the town of Wilmington, Rev. James Tate, a Presbyterian minister, coming from Ireland about 1760, opened a classical school in which he educated many of the young men who afterwards were leaders. (Foote). But the purpose of the Establishment to keep its hands upon higher education is seen in the charter of Queen's College of Charlotte, in which it was provided that "no person shall be admitted to be President of the said College but who is of the Established Church."[56] Yet, the guardians of the Establishment at the Court of Saint James thought this was not sufficient to secure the interest of the Church, and on their representation that, "this College if allowed to be incorporated will, in effect operate as a Seminary for the education and Instruction of youth in the Principles of the Presbyterian Church," the Crown promptly disallowed the Act.[57]

In only these three instances was the Schism Act recognized in North Carolina provincial law. In actual operation it could have done little harm. It was not from any special adverse legislation, but from the lack of legislation at all in behalf of schools, that the people of the Province suffered. Nor did this suffering cease with the coming of independence. It has continued almost to the present day. Both in the Provincial period and since the Baptists with their large membership in rural communities have suffered most of all. In the Provincial period conditions did not favor the rise of an educated ministry among the Baptists. In the counties where the Separate Baptists were numerous there were no classical schools. Nor were conditions much better in the counties where the Regular Baptists were found. None of their ministers was well enough educated to keep school, as did the Presbyterian ministers further west. Accordingly, there was long a dearth of well educated preachers among North Carolina Baptists, a condition which the more intelligent leaders of the denomination felt was greatly checking its progress. It was the year 1834 before any adequate provision for ministerial education was perfected.

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[56] *Colonial Records,* VIII, Act of Jan. 15, 1771.

[57] *Colonial Records,* IX, 250, 285.

## XV

# THE REGULATORS

Having seen that Governor Tryon regarded the Baptists as a sect in no way tolerated by his Government, "under no order of regulation," "enemies to society and a scandal to common sense," and having seen further his view that Baptist preachers were "rascally fellows," who by legislative Act of his contriving were forbidden under heavy penalties to officiate at marriages, we find further evidence of his animosity in a statement of Herman Husband that Tryon represented the Regulators as "a faction of Quakers and Baptists." Thus it appears that the severe measures Tryon used to quell the Regulators were directed at the same time against those whom he regarded as his religious foes. He detested Regulators and Baptists alike and purposed to crush them by use of military power. Accordingly, some account of the Regulator troubles must have place in our narrative.

The statement mentioned above, says Husband, was generally circulated in North Carolina at the time. When Tryon, in 1768, had found the militia of Orange unwilling to serve in his forceful suppression of the Regulators he turned to the settlements west of the Yadkin where Presbyterians were strong. Here he succeeded in raising as many men as he needed on the plea, mentioned above, that the Regulators were a "faction of Quakers and Baptists." For the truth of his statement Husband refers to the people among whom Tryon raised the troops with which he marched to Hillsboro in September, 1768. At this time Tryon had the support of the Presbyterian ministers, Revs. Hugh McAden, James Creswell, Henry Patillo and David Caldwell, who were not slow to assure him of their loyalty and support especially, said they, "to prevent the infection spreading among the people of our charge, and among the Presbyterian body in this Province as far as our influence will extend."[1] These same Presbyterian pastors addressed a letter to "the Presbyterian Inhabitants of North Carolina" also, urging them to be loyal to the Government and as many of them as had joined the Regulators to withdraw from them and trust the Governor to make good his proclamation that justice by due legal process would be done on all that had oppressed them.[2] With the powerful support of these able ministers it is no wonder that Tryon found it easy to levy the militia of the Presbyterian districts. If Tryon's purpose was to array Denomination against Denomination he had in a measure succeeded. Probably he was well aware that even before this the success of the Baptists had aroused the jealousy of the Presbyterians, and according to one observer the antipathy the two sects bore one another was astonishing.[3]

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[1] Letter to Tryon, *Colonial Records*, VII, 813f.

[2] *Colonial Records*, 814ff. In their letter to Tryon the Presbyterian pastors used such words as these:

"We humbly hope your Excellency has found but a very small proportion of the People of our Denomination among the present Insurgents, and we assure you Sir, if any such there are, they have departed from the invariable Principles of their Profession, which some bred in this Wilderness, for want of proper Instruction, may be supposed ignorant of.

"Fully sensible of the happiness of our situation in point of Religious Liberty, we shall not fail at all times to inculcate and proclaim the glorious and catholic doctrines of Faith, Piety, Virtue and Loyalty so as best to promote the glory of our Divine Master, the best Interests of mankind, the Honor of His Majesty's Government, and the ease and comfort of your Excellency's Administration."

And to those of their faith they said:

"Let such of you therefore as have been drawn into this unhappy confederacy return immediately to your Duty and Loyalty, remembering the Divine authority has enjoined 'Let every soul be subject to the Higher powers, for there is no Power but of God,'" etc.

[3] Mr. Woodmason in an account of North Carolina made in 1766, *Colonial Records*, VII, 283-88. "Wherefore," says Woodmason, "a Presbyterian would sooner marry ten of his children to Members of the Church of

Accordingly, it was an existing animosity to which Tryon was appealing when he represented in the Presbyterian settlements that the Regulators were a faction of Quakers and Baptists. He was making his campaign against the Regulators a crusade against the Baptists. That it did not turn out to be a religious war against them was no fault of his. It was owing to the fact that his supposition was untrue. When his statement became known the Regulators looked into the matter and found that their body was composed promiscuously of men of all sects and that some of their most trusted leaders were members of the Church of England. In the section east of the Yadkin many more of the Presbyterians were Regulators than their pastors supposed.[4]

That Tryon's active animosity to the Regulators of Orange was at least in part due to his religious intolerance, especially to Baptists and Quakers, was a view still held by Husband after the battle of Alamance. In a *Fan for Fanning*, published in Boston in the fall of 1771, Husband says:[5]

> Though we will not say, that there was not a design formed particularly against Orange County, because the body of its Inhabitants, were Dissenters from the established Church of England. If there was no such Design, why were not Granville, Brunswick and Cumberland, where Quakers and Baptists are not so numerous, treated with the lenient Measures of Powder and Ball?

This brings us to Morgan Edwards' account of the matter. He traveled through North Carolina, in 1771-72,

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England than one to a Baptist—the same from the Baptists as to the Presbyterians—their rancour is surprising."

[4] Husband's own words, as found in *An Impartial Relation,* reprint in *Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina,* p. 280, are as follows: "If it was false before, that the Governor did not Attempt to Raise the Militia, it was true now; for finding that he could not trust the Militia of our County, he try'd all over the Province; and with what Pains, and false Representations of us is best known to the Inhabitants everywhere among whom he applied. It was said, he Represented us as a Faction of *Quakers* and *Baptists,* who aimed to overset the *Church of England, &c.* This caused us to view ourselves, when we found our Body to consist Promiscuously of all Sects, and the Men who we put most trust in were of the Church of England Communion. In short, every honest Man who was not deterred by Fear and Cowardice was on our Side."

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 348.

seemingly visiting the battlefield of Alamance and Sandy Creek church. His statement is as follows:

> Governor Tryon is said to "have represented the regulators as a faction of Quakers and Baptists who aimed at oversetting the church of England" &c, *Impartial Relation*, p. 38. The same insinuation has also appeared in a newspaper. If the governor did as here suggested, he must be misinformed. For I made it my business to enquire into the matter; and can aver that among 4,000 regulators there were but seven of the denomination of Baptists; and these were expelled the societies they belonged unto in consequence of the resolve of the Baptist-association, held at Sandy-creek the second Saturday in October, 1769, "If any of our members shall take up arms against the legal authority or aid or abet them that do so he shall be excommunicated &c." When this was known abroad, one of the four chiefs of the regulators with an armed company broke into the assembly and demanded if there were such a resolve entered into by the association? The answer was evasive; for they were in bodily fear. This checked the design much; and the author of the *Impartial Relation* is obliged to own, p. 16, "There (in Sandycreek) the scheme met with some opposition on account that it was too hot and rash, and in some things not legal &c.[6] One of the seven Baptists was executed; and he at the point of death did not justify his conduct, but bitterly condemned it; and blamed two men (of very different religion) for deceiving him into the rebellion. . . . This man bore an excellent character in so much that one of his enemies was heard to say "That if all went to the gallows with Capt. Merrill's character, hanging would be an honourable death." All pitied him; & blamed the wicked Hunter, Gelaspie, Howell, Husband, Butler and others who deceived and seduced him. Upwards of 70 bills were found but none was against a Baptist but this one. The four principals in the regulation are well known to be of other religious denominations. I thought it necessary to say so much lest the governor's words should in time make the North Carolina regulation another Münster tragedy.[7]

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[6] Morgan Edwards was in error in supposing that Husband meant that the opposition spoken of was from Baptist people or Association. The reference is to the opposition of the earlier and more moderate Regulators of which Husband himself was leader.

[7] MS. History of N. C. Baptists, Appendix II. I give here Merrill's speech from the gallows which fills the omission indicated in the text above: "I stand here exposed to the world as a criminal; my life will soon be a change; God is my comforter and supporter. . . . I am condemned to die for opposing the government. All you that are present take warning by my miserable end when I shall be hung up as a spectacle before you. My

The above account refers specifically to such Regulators as took part in the battle of Alamance. Possibly it is true that only seven members of Baptist churches engaged in that battle, but this seems improbable. The action of the Association of 1769, however, did not forbid members of the Baptist churches from being Regulators but from taking up arms against the government. One church indeed, that of Haw River, did interpret the resolution in this stricter sense, and at its meeting on the last Saturday in November, 1769, passed a resolution. "That if any of their members should join the Regulators and take up arms against the lawful authority he should be excommunicated." This action

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first seducers were Hunter and Gelaspie; they had often solicited me, telling that a settlement only was contended for with regard to public officers: who, they said, had oppressed the people; and that unless those measures were taken, there could be no remedy or redress hereafter. Thus they pressed me on by assuring me the disputes (as they called them) then existing, might be settled without the shedding of blood. I considered this unhappy affair and thought, possibly, the contentions of the country might be brought to some determination without injury to any; and in this mind I joined the regulation. After I had listed under the banner of the Regulators I was ever after pressed to be made a leading man among them; and was one of the number who opposed Col. Waddell with his troops; information prevailing that the governor was in his march to lay waste this country and destroy its inhabitants; which I now find to be false, and propagated to screen old offenders from justice. As to my private life I do not know of any particular charge against me. I received by the grace of God a change fifteen years ago; but have since yt time been a backslider, yet providence, in which is my chief security, has been pleased to give me comfort under these evils in my last hour; and altho' the halter is round my neck, believe me, I would not change stations with any man on the ground. All you who think you stand take heed lest ye fall. I would be glad to say a few words more before I die. . . . In a few moments I shall leave a widow and ten children; I intreat that no reflection be cast on them on my account; and if possible, shall deem it a bounty should you, Gentlemen, petition the governor and council that some part of my estate may be spared for the widow and the fatherless; it will be an act of charity, for I have forfeited the whole by the laws of God and man."

Baptist historians have questioned the accuracy of Edwards' account, who was classed as a Tory, and was set on clearing the Baptists of what he considered a heinous crime. That Merrill spoke as Edwards says is hard to believe. A contemporary report in the *Boston Gazette* of August 12, 1771, says: "Merrill died in the most heroic Manner, his children being around him at the place of his execution. He declared that he died at Peace with his Maker and in the Cause of his oppressed Countrymen. (*Colonial Records,* VIII, 639.)

seems to have been taken partly because one of their members, Robert Mash (Marsh, as now spelled), had been threatened by the Regulators with thirty lashes a month until he should join them. The resolution of the church exasperated the Regulators and they took away the arms from such as would not join them. But in reality the action of the church was either too late or ineffective. Many members of this church and its branches were already Regulators. At least their names are found signed to the paper known as "Regulator Advertisement No. 9," which was a petition to the Governor and Council &c. of the inhabitants of Orange County asking for relief from the extortions of officers. On this petition are the names of Nathaniel Powell, a preacher and evangelist of the Deep River branch of Haw River church, and Francis Dorsett, soon after the pastor of the Rocky River church, at which meetings of the Regulators were held (called in the Colonial Records the meeting house at Moses Teague's), and scores of others from whom are descended the great majority of the present membership of the Baptist churches to the west and south of the Haw River in Chatham County. Here are found the names of Cheek, Bray, Welch, Culberson, Teague, Dorsett, Emberson (Emmerson), Needom, Edwards, Craven, Brewer, Brooks, Moon, Barber, Brown, Dowdy, Hutson, Murchison, and others, known progenitors of Baptist families, and by tradition, though by no contemporary record, said to have been members of this or that Baptist church. Even one of the exhorters of the Sandy Creek church, James Billingsley, was among the Regulators who assembled at Hillsboro in September, 1768.

In his discussion of the Regulator movement Morgan Edwards is not consistent with his statements elsewhere nor with the known facts. In reading his account of the departure of Baptists from the Province after the battle of Alamance one would gain the impression that the entire

Baptist population of the central and western counties belonged to that organization whose purpose was to secure redress of grievances and relief from unjust taxes and the extortion of officers. As many as belonged to this organization, whether they fought at Alamance or sought redress by peaceful means, must be regarded as Regulators. With the Regulator movement especially strong in Baptist communities it cannot be doubted that nearly the whole body of the Baptists were in the organization. This conclusion is justified by the reasoning of Colonel Saunders. After the battle of Alamance those who came into the different camps and took the required oath of submission numbered 6,409. "Including, therefore," says he, "participants and active sympathizers not sworn, and the women and children, the population involved must have been at least 50,000—that is to say, the great body of the white people in the territory east of the mountains and west of what is now Wake County."[8] As the settlers in that section between Haw River and Deep River and south of Cane Creek were for the most part Baptists in belief there can be no doubt that they were among the supporters of the Regulation.

In fact, as will appear below, no other political movement in our history had had such a far-reaching effect on the development of the Baptists not only in North Carolina but in the entire South as the Regulator movement.

Students of the Regulator movement have given its causes as follows: (1) The scarcity of money. (2) The land policy of Lord Granville's district. (3) The unequal incidence of taxation. (4) Unlawful exaction of fees by Clerks and County Registers of Deeds. (5) Unlawful exaction of taxes under color of legislative authority. (6) The unequal distribution of the burdens and benefits of government.[9] A further contributing cause was an administration which, including Governor and Council and some of the leading members of the Assembly as well as the officials of the several counties, was utterly unsympathetic with the great democratic population of North Carolina which was most numerous in the frontier counties. Some explanation of these matters is necessary.

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[8] *Colonial Records,* VII, xxxii.

[9] The first three are mentioned as underlying conditions by Bassett, while the latter three are given as the proximate causes by Saunders.

I begin with the unequal distribution of the burdens and benefits of government between the east and west. In the east the Governor had his residence at Brunswick until 1770, and after that at New Bern; all the members of his Council were from the east; the two treasurers of the Province were in the east; the Assembly met in the east, and in that body the east had the great preponderance of members in proportion to population. The counties of Orange, Mecklenburg, Rowan and Anson, with one-third of the white population of the Province had only eight of the seventy-two Assemblymen; the county of Orange with practically as many whites as the seven counties of Pitt, Beaufort, Hyde, Craven, Carteret, Bladen and New Hanover was represented by only two members while those counties had fourteen. The east had also the Chief Justice and four of the five Associate Justices of the Superior Courts, the Attorney General, the Secretary, and the other officers of administration. The general revenues of the Province were spent largely in the east and whatever currency there was in the Province was found there. In addition, the Assembly established a system of warehouses in the east where farm products and other commodities were inspected and stored. For these certificates were issued which circulated as money and thus did much to relieve the financial stringency. In the west remote from markets there were no warehouses and no certificates.

But all sections suffered from a scarcity of currency, the amount of which was far from adequate for the needs of the trade and business. And often the poorer taxpayer could get no money to pay his taxes. Even Governor Tryon recognized the hardship this entailed. When the taxpayer's property was sold under distraint it would often not bring enough to pay the tax, "and yet by the sale the owner would be greatly distressed if not ruined."[10]

But for all that, to satisfy his vanity and love of display Governor Tryon laid several additional heavy burdens on the already distressed taxpayers. The famous Governor's Palace, begun in 1767 and finished in 1770, cost fifteen thousand pounds. Tryon's visit to the Cherokee Indians to effect an agreement about the boundary line cost the Province twenty thousand pounds, the expense being much greater because in the last part of his journey Tryon marched with all the pomp and pride of war and with a retinue of 100 men in full military array. Again, his worse than useless display of military power at Hillsboro in 1768 cost a like sum. To many of the overburdened taxpayers these new extravagances, especially that of the Palace, brought increase in exasperation.

It was in the western counties, however, that the scarcity of currency was most severely felt. This was partly because of the excessive burden of taxation which these counties had to bear as compared with the counties of the east. There were at this time three sets of taxes assessed in North Carolina. First, there were the taxes assessed in each county for county purposes by the justices of peace sitting as an inferior court. This seems to have been in part at least a property tax. But the other two taxes were poll taxes and assessed in equal amount on rich and poor. One was the tax voted by the Assembly for the general expenses of the government. The other was the parish tax, levied by the vestry in each parish for the general parish dues, including where there was a minister the support of the minister of the Establishment of the parish. The list of taxables included all white males more than sixteen years of age and all slaves and free negroes of both sexes more than twelve years of age. In a way the tax on a rich man's slaves was a property tax, but except for this the poorest paid as much as the richest. The result was that Orange with the greatest number of taxables, 4,300 in 1767, paid the largest amount of tax, while Rowan with 3,643 taxables paid the next highest amount. The largest number of taxables in the counties of the east was in Craven, 2,898, more than half of them slaves. Pasquotank had only 792, and yet in the Assembly in which the taxes were assessed and the revenues appropriated Pasquotank had five representatives while Orange and Rowan paying each five times as much tax had only two each.

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[10] *Colonial Records*, VII, 679. The words are Governor Tryon's.

What made this unequal distribution of taxes and power in controlling public expenditures more unbearable was the fact that many of the sheriffs were dishonest and collected taxes for which they never accounted to the Treasurers, and yet they were continued in office by the Governor after their dishonesty became known. To meet the expenses of the French and Indian War the Province incurred a great debt. A tax was laid for its payment. At the time the Regulator troubles were beginning it was found that the sheriffs had collected in taxes from twenty-five to thirty thousand pounds more than the amount of the debt, but owing to their embezzlements much of the debt was still unpaid. Through the favor of Tryon's friend, Edmund Fanning, and his influence in the Assembly, these sheriffs were allowed to prey further on the people after the Assembly had declared taxes to pay the debt should no longer be collected. An investigation ordered by the Assembly of 1768 showed that every county had had recently at least one defaulting sheriff, and that they had failed to account for more than sixty-four thousand pounds of money collected in taxes. One of the first purposes of the Regulators was to have the sheriffs account for the taxes they had collected.

To the evils of heavy and partly illegal taxation was added in many counties that of extortion on the part of the public officers, sheriffs, registers of deeds and clerks of courts. None of these officers was elected by the people of the county; the sheriffs and registers were appointed by the Governor, while the clerks of the inferior courts were appointed by a creature of the Governor, the Provincial Secretary. Their fees as fixed by statute were moderate enough. But these officers were not satisfied with their legal fees and in many counties exacted three or four times what the law allowed. Herman Husband gives instances of the sheriff of Orange, Tyree Harris, exacting fees of the ignorant far in excess of those to which he was rightfully entitled, while such was his regular practice in the German settlements.[11] It was the extortions of the register of deeds, however, which were most numerous and most generally felt. According to the laws in force at that time, deeds were required to be proved and registered within one year from the time they were made, and especially in Lord Granville's district it was perilous to neglect having the deed registered. Thus the registers had an opportunity to enrich themselves by charging excessive fees and in many counties they took advantage of it. Holding their offices at the pleasure of Governor Tryon, some of them like Edmund Fanning of Orange charged four times the legal fee for registering deeds, and there is no evidence that Tryon ever of his own initiative raised his hand to interfere. On the other hand, those who complained of the officers were subjected to malicious prosecutions. When in 1765 George Sims had written the paper called the "Nut Bush Paper," addressed to the people of Granville County, he was brought into court for libel by the officers whose extortions he had exposed, and suffered imprisonment.[12] And when the people of Granville aroused by Sims's paper had petitioned the Assembly for a redress of grievances, the officers sued them likewise for libel. In 1770 the cases had not yet come to trial, but the officers were in the meantime "carrying on their old trade of oppressing and gripping the poor inhabitants." Furthermore, when in 1767 the Regulators sought to bring suit against the officers of Orange the only attorney they had hopes of serving them refused to take the case.[13] If we may believe Herman Husband and the author of the "Nut Bush Paper," the lawyers, too, were charging more than the fees allowed them by law and it was ruinous to employ one. In fact, these attorneys, of whom, according to Tryon, there were forty-five in the Province, profited about as much from unlawful fees as did the officers. All civil suits in which the amount involved was more than forty shillings, were brought before the courts of the county, and thus the lawyers had unusual opportunity for malfeasance.

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[11] *Fan for Fanning,* Reprint, p. 358.

But worst of all by means of cliques and organizations of the officers and their friends in many of the counties they kept control of the election even of the assemblymen who represented the county. This is generally recognized by historians. Herman Husband says that the organization of these officers and their friends was a Masonic club. He further says Fanning boasted that their union founded in Masonry was so strong and widespread in the county that the common people were powerless to elect other officers.[14]

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[12] Herman Husband, *Fan for Fanning,* Reprint, p. 347. See also p. 256-57.

[13] *Impartial Relation,* Reprint, p. 261.

[14] *Impartial Relation,* Reprint, p. 257; *Fan for Fanning,* p. 353. "It seems that Fanning and others of the officers had impressed the minds of the people in general with the belief that such was the union of brotherhood founded in Masonry that extended itself into all parts of the County, that it would be vain for the planters, or common people, to make any attempt by an election either to turn the present officers out or to chuse others from amongst themselves into place, or office." Fanning must have been greatly surprised and chagrinned when in the election of assemblymen in 1769,

If this statement be true, it shows that Fanning was willing to use an order which disclaims political activity to further his own selfish purposes.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that the oppressed people of Orange and of the other counties in which the Regulator movement gained force had no newspapers nor other public prints in which they could make their grievances known. Those who should have represented their interests in the Assembly were the corrupt officers of whose extortions they were complaining, kept in office by the power of an unholy union of these officers and their friends, and enjoying the favor of the Governor. It was out of these conditions that the Regulation arose. And Tryon by numerous proclamations sought to rob the oppressed of the right of assembling so as to formulate their grievances, while Samuel Johnston and others who followed his lead, as a fitting consummation of the invasion of the rights of the people, passed that bloody Act making it a felony for the wronged farmers of Orange to hold or to have held such assemblies. And yet the bust of that same Samuel Johnston is set in a niche of our State Capitol.

It does not accord with the scope of this work to discuss the Regulator movement in detail. It was not confined to any one section but was as widely extended as the evils which it was intended to correct. Though there was organized armed resistence only in Orange yet there was dissatisfaction in several instances marked by turbulence and violence in the counties of Brunswick, Duplin, Cumberland, Johnston, Pitt, Dobbs (Greene and Lenoir), Bute (Warren and Franklin), Edgecombe, Halifax, Granville, Mecklenburg and Anson, as well as in Orange, Rowan and Surry. There was certainly sympathy for the movement in most of the counties north of the Roanoke River. Thus with the

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Herman Husband, whom he so greatly detested, defeated him by an overwhelming majority. Then Fanning and his friends were ready to cry "fraud." *Colonial Records*, VIII, 111.

exception of the counties near New Bern practically the whole Province was involved, a fact of which Governor Tryon himself was well aware.[15]

Nearly every one who has been at pains to investigate the nature of these troubles, from 1771 until now, has come to practically the same conclusions in regard to them as that reached by Governor Josiah Martin, who, receiving his first impressions of the Regulators from Governor Tryon and his friends in Eastern North Carolina, conceived much hostility toward them. But when he had investigated, his attitude was changed to one of friendliness and sympathy.

After a journey through the seat of the Regulator troubles, Governor Martin wrote to the Earl of Hillsboro as follows:

> My progress through this country, my Lord, hath opened my eyes exceedingly with respect to the commotions and discontents that have lately prevailed in it. I now see most clearly that they (the Regulators) have been provoked by insolence and cruel advantages taken of the people's ignorance by mercenary tricking attorneys, Clerks and other little officers, who have practiced upon them every sort of rapine and extortion; by which having brought upon themselves their just resentment (that is the just resentment of the people) they (the officers) engaged Government in their defence by artful misrepresentations, (representing) that the vengeance that the wretched people in folly and madness aimed at their heads (that is, against the heads of the officers) was aimed against the constitution; and by this stratagem they threw an odium upon the injured people that by degrees begat a prejudice which precluded a full discovery of their grievances. Thus, my Lord, as far as I am able to discern the resentment of Government was craftily worked up against the oppressed, and the protection

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[15] *Colonial Records,* VII, 885. "I am persuaded if I had not had the fortune to stop the mischief that was intended against the town of Hillsborough, and insult to the Superior Court, the civil government of most of the counties in the province would have been overruled." Tryon letter of Dec. 24, 1768. Cf. also the following representing conditions in Chowan County, from letter of Alexander Elmsly to Samuel Johnston, July 27, 1771. *Colonial Records,* IX, 12: "The regulating spirit had begun to make its appearance years ago amongst yourselves, and I should not have been much surprised if I had heard that your Battle had been fought on the Banks of Pasquotank River, instead of Allemans (Alamance)."

> which the oppressors treacherously acquired where the injured and ignorant people expected to find it drove them (the people) to acts of desperation and confederated them in violences, which, as your Lordship knows, induced bloodshed, and I verily believe necessarily.[16]

Furthermore, the records show that Tryon was slow to take measures on his own initiative against the cliques of attorneys and officers who were practicing extortions on the people. Governor and Council answered with threats and abuse complainants who laid before them respectful petitions and many affidavits of extortions by officers.[17] Seemingly sharing Colonel Edmund Fanning's view that the Regulators were men "of shallow understanding," they thought it presumption in the people to complain. When in 1769 the distressed people of Orange and Rowan and Anson had presented to the Government their two noble petitions for redress of grievances, Tryon dissolved the Assembly before it had time to consider them.[18] Thus the people found no relief from the extortionate officers when they pursued the very means suggested by Tryon.

It is clear that such violence as is charged to the Regulators was provoked by the neglect of their grievances and the protection which the extortionate officers found in Tryon's inactivity. After Edmund Fanning's conviction of extortion Tryon's favor to him continued. It was through Tryon's device of erecting the hamlet of Hillsboro into a borough that Fanning regained a seat in the Assembly from which he had been excluded by the overwhelming vote of the citizens of Orange.

Much has been said about the attack the Regulators made on the court at Hillsboro in September, 1770. But they were not unprovoked even in this. They attacked the court because they found that even the courts were being used by their enemies not to give them justice but to make it impossible for them to secure it. When after the conviction of Fanning for extortion at Hillsboro in 1768 the wronged people began to bring legal action against other extortioners, they found juries and grand juries packed against them. And when in the trial any dared to testify against the officers, they were haled into court with malicious prosecutions. There is a convincing record of these matters in a paper signed by 174 subscribers and addressed to the judges of the court and presented to Judge Richard Henderson at Hillsboro in 1770.[19] The character and peaceful purposes of the Regulators may be seen in the following words from that paper:

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[16] *Colonial Records,* IX, 330. Letter of date of August 30, 1772.

[17] *Colonial Records,* VII, 785ff., 792ff.

[18] *Colonial Records,* VIII, 140f.

> We have labored honestly for our bread and studied to defraud no man, nor live on the spoils of other men's labors, nor snatched the bread out of other men's hands. Our only crime with which they can charge us is virtue in the very highest degree, namely, to risk our all to save our country from rapine and slavery in our detecting of practices which the law allows to be worse than robbery. It is not one in a hundred or a thousand of us who have broke one law in this our struggle for only common justice, which it is even a shame for any Government or any set of men in the law once to have denied us of. Whereas them as (they that) have acted the most legally are the most torn to pieces by the law through malicious prosecutions. . . . To sum up the whole matter of our petition in a few words, it is namely, that we may obtain unprejudiced juries; that all extortionate officers, lawyers and clerks may be brought to fair trials.[20]

Tryon throughout showed himself a tyrant. He was unwilling to see the Regulator troubles settled except on terms of abject submission to him and acquiescence in the continuance of those men in office of whom the people were complaining in every part of the Province. He was utterly intolerant of those who thought they had a right to call their officers to account; he thought that the one way to crush them and reduce them to subjection to such men as Edmund Fanning was by military force. Hence he resorted to military force. He supposed that by the battle of Alamance and his further prosecution and execution of the Regulator chieftains he had accomplished that desired object.[21]

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[19] *Colonial Records*, VII, 231ff. Henderson was the only judge who attended this court and it is from a letter written by him to Governor Tryon, *Ibid.*, 241ff., that we have the account generally followed of the riot of the Regulators which broke it up. But it should be remembered that this letter is an *ex parte* statement. The character of Henderson's prejudice against the Regulators may be seen in the record of his prosecution of Thomas Person, a Regulator member of the lower house of the Assembly of 1770, whose services to the State have made his name highly honored. The prosecution was so groundless that the Assembly required Henderson to pay the cost of it amounting to several hundred dollars. *Ibid.*, 467f.

[20] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 234.

But in reality the principles for which the Regulators were contending or rather came to contend for as a result of their activities and discussions were inconsistent with the ideas of government which Governor Tryon sought to impose on the liberty-loving people who had settled in North Carolina. These principles, as I have said, found expression in two noble petitions which were laid before the Assembly of 1769, one by a group of petitioners from Anson County, and a second from another group from the counties of Rowan and Orange, both of which groups are known to have been Regulators. "Of the forty-seven sections of the State Constitution adopted in 1776," says Colonel Saunders, "thirteen, more than one-fourth, are the embodiment of reforms sought by the Regulators. . . . The war of the Regulation ended, not with the battle of Alamance in 1771, but with the adoption of the State Constitution in 1776."

The statement is still repeated that the Regulators became Tories. But the evidence is almost all entirely to the contrary. Doubtless a few of the Regulators including the

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[21] *Colonial* Records, VII, xxxiv. "It is evident that Tryon did not desire a peaceful solution of matters, for, had he done so, he would have called the Legislature together in the winter of 1768, or early in 1769, nor would he have failed to call a new one early in 1770. At each of these times peace was perfectly possible. But he did not desire peace. Peace and accord with the Regulators was the last thing he wished, and the opportunity to make capital by crushing them out the thing, that above all others, he desired" (Col. W. L. Saunders).

Fields of Guilford County and James Pyle of Chatham County did become Tories, as did men all over the State. It is also true that the Regulators appreciated the kindness done them by Governor Martin and were his friends so long as the issue seemed to be between him and the leaders of eastern North Carolina. And who can find fault with them for taking the side of Governor Martin when these same eastern leaders as late as March 1, 1773, blocked his effort to have the Assembly pass an Act for the pardon of all the Regulator chieftains?[22] It was only natural that after such treatment by the men who loved Tryon and hated Martin the Regulators should be willing to rally to Martin's support so long as it was to protect the person of their Governor. Thus may be found the explanation of the fact that several hundred, possibly a thousand, of them assembled at Campbellton (Fayetteville) in February, 1776, supposing they should find Governor Martin there.[23] But when they found they were disappointed in this, by far the greater number returned to their homes. To defend their friend was one thing, to march against their fellow citizens quite another. Accordingly, at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge not two hundred Tories in addition to the Highlanders were found, and of these probably not more than one hundred were Regulators. After this there is no evidence that any great body of Tories was ever raised in the Regulator country. In fact, in 1781, after Cornwallis had set up the royal standard at Hillsboro and brought Martin again to his position as Governor, to his disappointment he found that the Regulators did not join his army. Their love for liberty was stronger than their love for even the man who had so signally befriended them.[24] They had been enjoying under a free government the very reforms for which they had pleaded in vain under the royal government, and after five years they were as ardent patriots as any in the State.

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[22] *Colonial Records,* IX, 433.

[23] It is not certain how many Regulators assembled at that time. Ashe speaks of regiments from certain counties. That from Chatham under James Pyle numbered only 50 men. In fact, no considerable number of Regulators seems to have come from any counties except from Guilford and Anson. Thomas Person (*Colonial Records,* X, 450) said there were very few Tories in Orange.

The fact that most of the men who signed the Regulator Advertisement, No. 9, continued to hold their lands unmolested, while some of them were entering lands during the Revolutionary period, is sufficient proof that they were not Tories. Traditions were long current and have not altogether died out in the Regulator section of country as to which were the Tory families. These were very few, and for the most part men who owned no land.[25]

It is well known that in general the Baptists were ardent patriots. Below I shall offer ample evidence that the North Carolina Baptists were no exception to the rule. Those in the Regulator country were Separates and had the same reason to support the patriot cause as did their Separate brethren in Virginia who, according to Semple, were a unit for independence. At least two Separate Baptist preachers did distinguished service to the State in the Revolutionary period. These were Edmund Lilly of Anson and David Allen of Surry.[26] Like their brethren in the Kehukee Association they must have welcomed such relief from religious inequalities as came with the adoption of the State Constitution in December, 1776, by which the Baptists, lay and clerical, were but on an equal footing in all things with members of other denominations. If any were doubtful at the beginning of the troubles, they learned in a few years how sweet liberty is. And not only did Cornwallis find no support in the former Regulator population, but the noted Tory Leader, David Fanning, found no place for his rendezvous in Orange and Chatham but fixed it to the south of Deep River near the corner of the present county of Randolph.

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[24] Cornwallis declared, "I could not get one hundred men in all the Regulator's Country to stay with us even as militia." *State Records,* XVII, 1011.

[25] Only one prominent layman who is known to have been a Baptist was also a Tory. This was Conner (Conrad) Dowd, who had his home where the road from Dan River crossed Deep River. He was a merchant as well as a farmer. He is said by Morgan Edwards to have been a member of the Deep River church and after the dissolution of that church of the Haw River church. Here Baron DeKalb's army was encamped in July, 1780, waiting for Gates. (*State Records,* XV, 3.) Evidence that at the beginning of the War Dowd was a Tory is conclusive. He used his credit to secure supplies for the use of General McDonald's army of Highlanders. (*Colonial Records,* X, 602.) Later he refused to deliver salt to the patriots. (*Colonial Records,* X, 704, 839.) His property was subject to confiscation, but after the close of the War, his widow was allowed to hold it and to sue his debtors. Laws of 1784, Chap. LXIX. *State Records,* XXIV, 39.

[26] *Colonial Records,* X, 251; State Records, XVII, 825ff., XXIV, 233.

## XVI

## THE EXODUS OF THE BAPTISTS

The most important effect of the Regulator movement on the progress of the Baptists of North Carolina and the South, especially of the Separate Baptists, remains to be told. This was the exodus that it caused of the Baptists from the Province. In its final results it was much like the persecutions that drove the early Christians from Jerusalem. These Baptists scattered abroad went to their new homes preaching Baptist principles and establishing Baptist churches on the new frontiers in Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia.

For this exodus our principal authority is Morgan Edwards. In speaking of the Sandy Creek church, he says:

> It began with 16 souls; and in a short time increased to 606, spreading its branches to Deep River and Abbott's Creek, which branches are gone to other provinces; and most of the members of this church have followed them, in so much that in seventeen years it is reduced from 606 to 14 souls, and is in danger of becoming extinct. The cause of the dispersion was the abuse of power which too much prevailed in the Province and caused the inhabitants to rise in arms, and fight for their privileges; but being routed, (May 16, 1771), they despaired of seeing better times, and therefore quitted the Province. It is said that 1,500 families departed since the battle of Alamance; and, to my knowledge a great many more are only waiting to dispose of their plantations in order to follow them. This is to me an argument that their grievances were real, and their oppression great notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary.

Edwards tells of a like exodus of the membership of the church of Little River, in that part of Anson since erected into the county of Montgomery, and its five branches; from its membership of five hundred they were reduced to a handful, "owing chiefly to the fruitless issue of the Regulation at Alamance, which made the most of them quit the Province."

Another note of Mr. Edwards tells of the departure of Baptists from another church, Great Cohara, in the present county of Sampson, whose large membership was reduced to eight because "the troubles of the Regulation compelled them to quit the Province."

Though Edwards does not mention other instances of exodus in which there were migrations of whole communities because of the tyrannical measures of Tryon and his adherents, doubtless many other Baptists were among those who left the Province at this time. We have seen that the author of a *Fan for Fanning* and of the *Impartial Relation* believed that Tryon had been influenced by his hatred of the Baptists to take his cruel measures against the Regulators of Orange. That this is not mere idle speculation is proved by an incident related by Morgan Edwards which shows the hostility of Edmund Fanning to a Baptist leader, Rev. Joseph Murphy. First a member of the Deep River church in the present county of Chatham, then of the Little River church, Mr. Murphy in 1768 went to a new church at Shallow Ford in Surry County, now Yadkin, and had the same remarkable success in gathering a large membership as previously at Little River. He did not escape the notice of Fanning, who accused him of "aiding and abetting the Regulation," though he had done nothing of the kind. When Tryon was making his triumphal tour through the Regulator Country after the battle of Alamance, Edwards says that a party of dragoons was sent to seize Mr. Murphy, and though they could not find him they "stole his papers and a new pair of stockings which were the most valuable things they saw in his little cot."[1]

Those who went west found homes in territory where they believed they were beyond the boundary of North Carolina and in Virginia, but in reality in that part of North Carolina yielded by treaty to the Cherokee Indians, in the northeastern part of the present State of Tennessee. Here a settlement known as Watauga was begun in 1768 by ten families which had come from the neighborhood of the present city of Raleigh. They were soon joined by Daniel Boone from the Yadkin and James Robertson from Wake County, and by a stream of immigrants which grew larger year by year. It was, however, after the battle of Alamance in May, 1771, that the largest flow of immigrants came to this settlement. Sacrificing their property in many instances these liberty-loving North Carolinians sought homes beyond the mountains, where they believed they should have exemption from "the supercilious annoyance of those who claimed preëminence above them."[2] Many of these settlers were Baptists. From the old Sandy Creek church there came a small body in something like a church capacity, and as a branch of the parent church, "they emigrated to the wilderness and settled on Boon's Creek," and established a church which was later called Buffaloe Ridge, and many years later was under the care of Jonathan Mulky, one of the ministers who had come from Sandy Creek. It is said that this church continues to this day as the Baptist Church of Johnson City, Tennessee.

There were also probably many from the churches of Abbott's Creek, Shallow Ford, the Forks of the Yadkin, and Mulberry Fields, but of these we have no record. Very soon after their arrival they organized two Baptist churches.[3] But these were broken up and their membership scattered by the Indian War of 1774.[4] Probably owing to the disturbances caused by the War of the Revolution these churches were not immediately reorganized. For the men of this section were actively though not regularly engaged in the fighting of that war. A large contingent was in that "rearguard of the Revolution"[5] which won the important victory of Kings Mountain. Another group formed a considerable part of the army of George Rogers Clarke which captured Vincennes and wrested the territory between the mountains and the Mississippi from the dominion of the British. Thus those people whom Tryon thought to render submissive by arms proved to be that reserve force which by its timely valor, exercised in two far distant fields, frustrated the plans of the British and made forever impossible in the free territory of the United States such tyranny as Tryon had displayed in North Carolina. But the war was not yet over, when the members of one of these churches which had been located on Clinch River returned and reorganized as the church known as Glade Hollows. About the year 1780 eight Baptist preachers came and settled in this section. One of them was William Murphy, a brother of Joseph Murphy, who at this time was pastor of the churches on the Yadkin. He had been baptized at Deep River church, but had since labored for the most part in Virginia, where he had met with much success. Another was Tidence Lane from the church of Sandy Creek, though his home was on the Yadkin. With each of these ministers came a considerable number of those who had been members of their churches. By the year 1781 these Baptists had established five or six churches, which organizing a kind of temporary Association, became members of the Sandy Creek Association. This relationship was kept up until 1786 when because of their remoteness from the parent Association they organized an independent Association known as the Holston.[6] Thus these churches, situated at the gateway to Tennessee and Kentucky and the West of that day, gave character and direction to the Baptists as they spread to the Mississippi and beyond, continuing the doctrines of the Separates of Sandy Creek.

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[1] Mr. Edwards had a detail in his *Tour,* etc., which he omitted in his manuscript history, and which reads. "The vile Col. F. . . .n accused him of aiding and abetting the Regulation," etc.

[2] Haywood, *Civil and Political History of Tennessee.* Chapter II.

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[3] Semple. *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 276.

[4] *Ibid.* See also Benedict, *Hist. of Baptists*, I, 216.

[5] Gilmore, *The Rearguard of the Revolution.* But there is no evidence that the settlers here were predominantly Scotch-Irish as he supposed. There is no record of the departure of Presbyterian congregations from the Province after the battle of Alamance.

From Sandy Creek and the Separate churches many went to South Carolina as a result of the Regulator troubles. But as many had gone before these troubles began, it will be most convenient to treat the whole immigration movement of Separates to South Carolina under one head, pointing out in proper places the influence of the Regulation on it. In general, it may be said here that while the Baptists from the parts of North Carolina to the north of Sandy Creek went to Tennessee those from Little River and the south-eastern parts of the Province went rather to South Carolina when they despaired of being protected in their rights by the Government of North Carolina.

It may be mentioned here, too, that at least nine of the sixteen constituent members of the Sandy Creek Baptist church went to South Carolina. These were Joseph Breed and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Peter Stearns, Ebenezer Stearns and wife, Enos Stinson and wife. Of these more will be said below. It may be said here, too, that the Separates occupied practically the whole extent of the South Carolina frontier and keeping pace with the tide of population gave their character and spirit to the Baptists in their progress to the south and west, a progress which has continued to this day.

The first body of Separates to go from North Carolina to South Carolina was a large portion of the Deep River church, which as a traveling church went first to the Broad River section, and there in August, 1759, established organized worship with Philip Mulky as minister. Those who formed this church were Philip Mulky and wife, Stephen Howard and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Obadiah Howard and wife, Benjamin Gist and wife, Charles Thompson, Thomas Thompson and Rachel Collins. Here they remained for two years, in which time their church had increased to 104 members. Then the thirteen who had come from the Deep River church left the young church, and went to Fair Forest, one hundred miles farther south. The church they left seems to be the same church which was reorganized as the Little River church, on February 26, 1770, and of which Rev. Jacob Gibson, a Virginian and bred a Churchman, was ordained pastor on November 7, 1771, by Rev. Daniel Marshall and Rev. Philip Mulky.

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[6] Benedict, Vol. I, 216ff.

The thirteen who had removed to Fair Forest with their minister, Rev. Philip Mulky, established there another zealous church, which in ten years had increased to 167 members. This church was said by Morgan Edwards to be an offspring of Shubal Stearns' church and lively and zealous, the first in the Province of the distinction of Separates, and with the exception of Stephens' Creek, established by Rev. Daniel Marshall, the mother of all the rest. When Morgan Edwards was in the Province in 1772 it consisted of five branches, the parent church at Fair Forest, and branches at Lawson's Fork, thirty-five miles off, at Catawba, 100 miles off, at Enoree, and at Thickety.[7]

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[7] Philip Mulky was one of the most successful and active of the early Separate preachers. As related by Morgan Edwards he told marvelous stories of his conversion. He was living at that time with his wife in Halifax County in North Carolina. After he had many harrowing experiences Rev. John Newton who was afterwards pastor at Black River in North Carolina and at Congaree in South Carolina came to his house, and aroused him still more by reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Shortly afterwards Mulkey found peace, and seemingly under Newton's direction went to Sandy Creek where he was baptized on December 25, 1756. He was ordained on the month of October, 1757, at which time he took charge of the Deep River church and continued in that charge until the church was dissolved, part of it going as an organized church to

Probably not more than a year after the arrival of Mulky in South Carolina Daniel Marshall came with members from the church at Abbott's Creek.[8] Coming to Beaver Creek, a tributary of Broad River, they organized a church, if indeed they did not preserve the organization already existing. Soon under Marshall's preaching a considerable number of members were added.[9]

"Some time in 1762," according to Morgan Edwards,

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Little River in North Carolina and another part going as a traveling church with Mulky to South Carolina. Before this we have seen he had done evangelistic work in the section near New Bern. In South Carolina he was very active. In addition to his work at Broad River and at Fair Forest with its large membership and four branches, he continued to do much preaching of an evangelical character. In 1764 he preached and baptized at Congaree, having among his converts Rev. Joseph Reese, one of the most successful of the South Carolina Baptist preachers, who afterwards became pastor of the Congaree church and its large number of branches. He also assisted in the ordination of Jacob Gibson who had gathered the remains of the church Mulky left at Broad River and which was reconstituted under the name of Little River. In October, 1771, he also assisted in the ordination of Rev. Thomas Borris as pastor of Bush River church. Mr. Edwards has this to say of him: "Mr. Mulky's acquirements entitle him to no higher degree than that of an English scholar; neither is there anything extraordinary in his natural endowments, except a very sweet voice, and a smiling aspect; that voice he manages in such a manner as to make soft impression on the heart and fetch down tears from the eyes in a mechanical way. Mr. Garrick is said to have learned a solemn pronunciation of the interjection O from Dr. Fordice; but, if I mistake not, both might learn from Mulky to spin that sound & mix it with awe, distress, solicitude, many other affections. His success has been such as to hazard being exalted above measure in his own esteem and the esteem of his converts; but a thorn was put in his flesh about 4 years ago which will keep him humble while he lives, and teach his votaries that he is but a man." For as Benedict says, Vol. II, 156, after he began to stumble, "he soon fell into many heinous sins, and remained, when an old man, an outcast from the church, and a disgrace to that precious cause, of which he had been such an eminent champion."

[8] As Marshall left Beaver Creek, his first stop in S. C., in 1762, a year not later than 1760 is indicated for his coming to South Carolina. Benedict, Vol, II, 155, says, "About the year 1760, a number of Separate ministers of Sandy Creek connexion in North Carolina began to travel and settle in this State, some a little before and some a little after the above-mentioned period. Among the ministers Daniel Marshall and Philip Mulky seem to have been the most distinguished."

[9] Sketch of Marshall by his son: "In this place likewise a large church was raised under his ministry, and until brought to a good degree of maturity in divine things was an object of his tender and unremitted care and solicitude. At the direction of Divine Providence, as he conceived, and as subsequent events have proved, his next removal was to Horse Creek, about fifteen miles north of Augusta."

Marshall leaving Beaver Creek with a few of his members arrived in the vicinity of Stephens' Creek, ten miles from Augusta. This is the place called Horse Creek in the sketch of Marshall by his son. Here he set up a meeting and soon made many disciples. They were joined by the "remainder of his church" from Beaver Creek, and the Stephens' Creek church became a large and influential body. Under the same missionary impulse that had brought him from one frontier to another Mr. Marshall left this charge, too, in 1771, and settled at Kioka, Georgia. He had been active in South Carolina, preaching the gospel in destitute places and assisting in organizing churches and ordaining ministers. We have seen that he preached and baptized at Congaree. Among those converted under his preaching and baptized at that place by him were Timothy Dargan and Thomas Norris, both of whom afterwards became Baptist preachers. At the same place he baptized William Dargan also. Mr. Marshall in 1766 preached at the house of one named Samuel Newman in the Bush River section. A few years later he assisted in the organization of a church at this place and in the ordination of one who was afterwards its minister, Rev. Thomas Norris. About the same time, November 7, 1771, he assisted Mulky in the ordination of the Rev. Jacob Gibson as pastor of the Little River church.[10]

While he remained at Stephens' Creek Marshall kept up some connection with the church at Beaver Creek.[11] But his main interest was still on the frontier. He had already in 1771 crossed the Savannah and begun the Baptist work in Georgia. On his second or third visit to that Province while in prayer he was seized by an officer of the law and being brought into court was ordered to "preach no more in Georgia." But obeying God rather than man he continued to preach, and in a few years had established as branches of Stephens' Creek two preaching places in Georgia, Quakers Settlement and Kioka. To the latter he and his family removed on January 1, 1771, and there he spent the remainder of his life, neither fleeing the Province on the approach of the British armies, as did most other ministers, nor deterred by other difficulties. Thus the Georgia Baptists, too, had from the first the impress of the Separates of Sandy Creek.

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[10] The information on which these statements are based is found in Morgan Edwards' *S. C. Baptists.* It may be said thta Morgan Edwards does not always agree with himself. His finished work, *Materials towards a History of the Baptists* of the several Provinces was based upon notebooks he made on the spot in his travels. In his notebook on the S. C. Baptists he has this to say in an appended note: "Daniel Marshall with the remains of the Abbott's Creek removed to Beaver Creek near Broad River in 1766. Their names Daniel Marshall and wife, James Finley and wife, James Martin, Mary Tubs." But in his notebook account of Stephens' Creek church he says that the meeting house was erected at Stephens' Creek in 1766. It is probable in this instance that his corrected statement is nearer the truth.

[11] Morgan Edwards in his Notebook on South Carolina mentions Beaver Creek as a branch of Stephens Creek.

Most of the facts of Marshall's life have been given in the previous record and are easily available elsewhere. He was missionary to the Mohawks in 1753-54 as a Presbyterian; he was baptized at Winchester in Virginia in 1754; he joined Stearns and his company and came to Sandy Creek in 1755; he was ordained pastor of Abbott's Creek church in 1756; preaching all over North Carolina as far east as New Bern and making visits to Virginia in his evangelizing zeal during the years 1755 to 1760, baptizing hundreds of converts and among them such distinguished men as Col. Samuel Harris of Virginia; then coming at about the age of fifty-five to South Carolina and continuing his labors there until he was sixty-five years of age; then to Georgia with unabated missionary zeal and with never failing success. No man better exemplifies the spirit with which hundreds and thousands of Baptist preachers since his time have carried the gospel to all parts of the South. Shortly before his death, which took place on November 2, 1784, in the 78th year of his age, he rose for the last time in his pulpit and said: "I am resolved to finish my course in the cause of God." And he did.

We have seen that both Mulky and Marshall had preached at Congaree. The result of their preaching was a group of churches which may be called the Congaree group. On November 30, 1766, the converts in this section were organized into a church by Rev. Joseph Murphy, at that time minister of the church at Little River in Anson (Montgomery) County, N. C. Shortly afterwards, Joseph Reese, whom Mulky had baptized, was ordained pastor by Elders Oliver Hart and Evan Pugh, and with him as colleague Rev. John Newton, who had preached many years already in North Carolina, (at Black River), where, says Edwards, his labors had been much blest.[12] Under the enthusiastic ministry of Mr. Reese the Congaree church in five years had four branches in addition to the church at Congaree. These were Wateree Creek, Twenty-five Mile Creek, Four Holes, and another in Amelia Township. Another branch had already become an independent church. This was known as the High Hills of Santee, commonly called Santee, probably in the present county of Sumter. The first to preach here was Rev. Jeremiah Dargan, whom we shall soon find in connection with the Cashie church in Bertie County, North Carolina. This was in 1769. The people were "wild and barbarous" and he made little impression. But soon after Rev. Joseph Reese went among them and with his powerful preaching greatly alarmed the hitherto careless people. As a consequence fifty-six or more were converted and baptized, and after a few years they were constituted an independent church with 70 members. Among them was the celebrated Richard Furman, who became their pastor in 1772.

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[12] As Hart and Pugh were Regular Baptists and not Separates trouble arose in consequence of their ordaining Reese and Newton, as may be seen in Edwards' sketch of Rev. John Newton, which is as follows: "Rev. John Newton. He was born, Aug. 7, 1732, in Pennsylvania. Bred a churchman. Baptized by Rev. Joshua Potts about the year 1752. Came to this country (South Carolina) in 1765. Ordained at Congaree, February 1868 by Rev. Oliver Hart and Evan Pugh, but had preached many years before in North Carolina where his labors had been much blest. Mr. Reese and himself were both injured by the Sandy Creek Association in North Carolina for their receiving ordination from the Regular Baptists (the Congaree church being in connection with the aforesaid Assn.) Mr. Reese made acknowledgement and was restored to their favor and his ordination confirmed; Mr. Newton thought he had done what was right and would make no acknowledgement. The Assn. claiming authority to govern the churches directed Mr. Reese and the church to silence Mr. Newton. This was accordingly done while he was in the midst of a useful and successful work. Both Mr. Reese and the church were afterwards convinced they were wrong in obeying the mandate of the Assn. and restored Mr. Newton; but he never fully engaged in ministerial work afterward."

To the west of the Congaree the Sandy Creek missionaries founded still another group of churches which we may call the Saluda group. On August 10, 1770, a church was constituted on Little Saluda by Col. Samuel Harris, the great Baptist preacher of Virginia, and Rev. James Childs, at that time a minister of Louisa County, Virginia, but preaching in the Rocky River section of Anson County.[13] In September of this same year the church at Mine Creek also in this same region was constituted by Harris and Childs, though most of its constituent members had probably been converted under the preaching of Rev. Joseph Reese, who had visited this section occasionally since 1766. At Bush River in the same section, Marshall, as we have seen, had begun preaching about the year 1766; in June 1772 the converts were constituted into a church by Marshall and Mulky. The first minister was Rev. Samuel Newton, who, according to Edwards, was "called and baptized in North Carolina," but was ordained as pastor of this church in August, 1771, at which time he took charge of the church. He was already a man of some age and died the following November.[14] Upon the death of Newton he was succeeded by Rev. Thomas Norris, another North Carolinian from near Bath but baptized at Congaree. The church at Raburn's Creek likewise belongs to this group. It had had a house of worship since 1767 but was not constituted until September, 1771. Among the constituent members were four who had been members of the Sandy Creek church, namely, Enos Stinson and wife and Ebenezer Stearns and wife. Probably these and others of its constituent members had come to South Carolina as a result of the Regulator troubles. Still another church belongs to this group, that of Little River (of Saluda). They were constituted a church on August 10, 1770, by Harris and Childs. This church is mentioned by Mr. Edwards in his notebook on South Carolina Baptists but not in his larger history. There is, however, another Little River mentioned by Edwards in his larger work, which was a branch of the Broad River, and which was really a reconstitution of the Broad River church founded by Mulky in 1759. The minister of this second Little River church was in 1771 Rev. Jacob Gibson, a Virginian, who had given the land for the church and had been ordained by Marshall and Mulky.

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[13] These men had been sent by the Association of 1770 to visit sister churches in the south governments in distress. At the meeting of the Virginia General Association in November, 1771, Harris made report "full to our satisfaction." Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* I, 52.

[14] It is not known just where Samuel Newton had been called to the ministry in North Carolina. I had thought to identify him with the

It will be seen that the Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek had occupied the whole South Carolina frontier and had advanced to the east within one hundred miles of Charleston. This was practically all accomplished when all the Separates were in the one Association. After the division of the Sandy Creek Association the Separate Baptists in South Carolina organized the Congaree Association. Morgan Edwards made unsuccessful efforts to have it join the Regular Bap-

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Rev. Samuel Newton who about this time was pastor of the church at Bull Tail in Duplin County. But I am advised by Hon. J. T. Alderman, who has made a study of the Newton family in North Carolina, that the Samuel Newton of S. C. is not the Samuel Newton who organized Bull Tail (Wells' Chapel) in 1756, and served the church as pastor till his death during the Revolutionary war. His widow then married a Howard and moved to Georgia. Samuel Newton left a son named Moses Newton and a daughter named Miriam, who married a man named Fane. Samuel Newton was buried near his old home.

tists, and supposing he had succeeded called the churches of this Association Regular Baptist churches. But the efforts failed. The Congaree Association, by seeking to exercise arbitrary power over the member churches, brought about its own dissolution. Later from the churches which continued to function with unimpaired efficiency after the dissolution of the Congaree Association was formed the Bethel Association. The date was 1789. From this in a few years were formed the Broad River Association some of whose churches were in North Carolina, the Saluda Association, and the Edgefield Association. The Separates were now the most numerous body of Baptists in South Carolina, but after the formation of the Bethel Association the little differences between Separates and Regulars were upon the initiative of the Bethel Association adjusted, and the distinction of Separate and Regular fell into disuse, as it was already falling into disuse in North Carolina. When I come to the union of the two groups in North Carolina I will discuss the contribution made by each group, the Separates and the Regulars, to the component body now known only by the name of Baptists. I trust enough has been said here to indicate how the coming of the Separates with their enthusiastic evangelism was the decisive element in the wonderful increase of the Baptists in the South, and practically in all the region west of the Alleghany Mountains. Starting from Sandy Creek those who preached the gospel as Stearns and Marshall preached it and taught the doctrines they taught, have won a mighty empire of mighty people.

# XVII

## THE SANDY CREEK ASSOCIATION 1758-1790

Having followed the Separate Baptist ministers in their missionary labors as they planted churches, beginning at Sandy Creek and first going to the regions near, then to Virginia, to the Yadkin, to the east as far as the ocean, then to South Carolina and Georgia, and finally westward along the Yadkin and across the mountains into Tennessee, we next turn to consider the Association they formed. Our authorities are Morgan Edwards and Semple for the years 1758 to 1770 and Benedict for the years following. All their accounts are meagre. Semple says of the beginning of the Association:

> Having now constituted several churches, and there being some other that exercised the rights of churches, tho' not formally organized, Mr. Stearns conceived that an association composed of delegates from all these would have a tendency to impart stability, regularity, and uniformity to the whole. For this prudent purpose he visited each church and congregation and explaining the contemplated plan induced them all to send delegates to his meeting house in the ensuing January, which was in the year 1760.[1]

We have already noticed (page 6th) that through the counsel of Mr. Stearns an association was formed and organized January 1760, and who met again in July of the same year. Including both these meetings, the list of the churches stood thus:

Sandy Creek. Elder Shubal Stearns.
Deep River. Nathaniel Powell (a brother).
Abbott's Creek. Elder Daniel Marshall.
Little River. Joseph Breed (a Brother).

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[1] *Virginia Baptists*, p. 6. See also Devin, *Grassy Creek*, p. 52.

Neus River. Ezekiel Hunter.
Black River. John Newton.
Dan River.
Pittsylvania C'ty, Va. Elder Samuel Harris.
Lunenburg C'ty, Va. William Murphy.[2]

Morgan Edwards' statement does not agree in all respects with Backus and Semple. He says of this Association that, "It began in 1758, in June 2nd Monday, at Sandy Creek, and therefore called the Sandy Creek Association. The constituents were the church of Sandy Creek, of Abbott's Creek, and of Deep River."[3]

In regard to these conflicting views it may be said that the statement of Edwards as to the date of organization is doubtless correct. The Association was organized in the year 1758. Such was the date given Edwards when he was in the Association in 1771 or 1772, and this is the traditional date still kept in the records of the Association. But there are other considerations which support this view. The Deep River church which had a delegate at the first meeting of the Association was already extinct in 1760, its members having gone partly with Elder Philip Mulky to Broad River, South Carolina, and partly with Rev. Joseph Murphy to Little River in Anson (Montgomery) County. Again,

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 43. Neus River is a mistake for New River. Backus, ***Hist. of New England Baptists,*** Chapter XIV, has the following account: "And in and after 1758 many were converted and baptized near the south border of Virginia, and they began an association in 1760, of five churches in Carolina and one in Virginia and they increased fast."

Above, in my account of the Separates in eastern North Carolina, I indicated that the church of Black River was somewhere on the stream of that name in the present county of Sampson. The following from the MS. Autobiography of Rev. David S. Williams tells of a church of that name in the region where McAden found Baptists in 1756. In speaking of his activities in 1827, Mr. Williams says: "There was an old church on the East of Cape Fear River near Averysboro called Black River. Nathan Gully had preached [here] for many years and left them, and the church had to a certain extent ceased to exist. Here Mr. Williams gathered a congregation, mostly of young people, for the older members were "Anti-Missionary and, indeed, almost anti-everything." Possibly this is the church of which Rev. John Newton was pastor.

[3] Edwards, *A Tour,* etc., under head of "Association of the Separates in North Carolina."

Joseph Breed, who is represented as a delegate to this meeting, was connected with Little River for just the one year 1758, since in 1759 he went with Mulky to South Carolina and became a constituent member of the Broad River church, and two years later went on to the Fair Forest church and is heard of no more. Though Little River was not organized as a distinct church until 1759, a congregation was already gathered there in 1758 and had built a meeting house.[4] Here, it seems, Breed was pastor, although he was not ordained but only a licensed minister. One other consideration as to the date of the forming of the Association is that at the second meeting of the Association Rev. John Gano was said to have been present as has been narrated above.[5] This fixes the date of that second meeting as not later than 1759, for late in 1759 or early in 1760 Gano had left the Province to escape the incursions of the Indians, as I have already told, and did not return until the year 1774, when he held a meeting on the Yadkin.[6] In consideration of these things, the true date of the beginning of the Sandy Creek Association must be considered to be 1758.

In regard to the churches, however, which composed the Association in the first year, Morgan Edwards seems to be in error. Semple knows from some independent source, not from Backus or Edwards, that there were two meetings in the first year, one in January and a second in July. The first meeting he supposes to have been small and preliminary.[7] It is altogether probable that at this meeting only the churches of Deep River and Abbott's Creek were represented in addition to the church at Sandy Creek. It was an easy day's ride, even in the dead of winter, from both Abbott's Creek and Deep River to Sandy Creek. It is not at all improbable that it was delegates from these churches alone who met with Stearns in this preliminary meeting to make plans for the fuller second meeting in the summer when the weather and traveling were likely to be better. But that the fuller second meeting was composed of representatives from the larger list of churches mentioned by Semple hardly admits of a doubt. It is incredible that after Stearns had visited so many churches and urged them to send delegates only two in almost his immediate neighborhood should have met his wishes. As was said above, if Joseph Breed ever came as a delegate from the Little River church it must have been at this meeting of the Association. Even Semple's list does not seem to be complete, for Rev. James Reed was there from the church at Grassy Creek, Devin says as a delegate in consequence of the visit of Shubal Stearns.[8] It may be seen from my acount above that the other North Carolina churches and congregations said by Semple to have had delegates at the meetings the first year were already established. It is altogether probable that they were included in Stearns's plan.

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[4] Morgan Edwards, Notebook, our copy of the *Material &c.* has 1768, manifestly a copyist's error.

[5] See the passage from Benedict.

[6] MS. Minutes of the Dutchman's Creek church, in what is now Davie County, for the years 1772 to 1787. Copy in W. F. C. Library.

[7] Work cited, p. 44, footnote.

Not much more is known of the first and second meetings of this Association than is told by Semple and incorporated in the account of Benedict above. To these I refer the reader. All the Associations from the first for many years were "conducted in love, peace and harmony." And this in spite of the fact that they had no moderator for those first years and not for many years later, the reason being that it was thought unfit that the permission of a man should be got by one who was speaking for God and His kingdom. But the Association had a clerk and certain rules of decorum, as will appear below. All the meetings were marked by enthusiasm. This was especially true of the third meeting, that of 1760. The young ministers coming from the newly established churches and congregations in eastern North Carolina, in Virginia and in South Carolina, and reporting how the word of the Lord was running and being glorified, and bringing requests for more preachers to be sent created an enthusiasm like that which marked the early church in Jerusalem. "They had a very happy association." (Semple.)

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[8] *History of Grassy Creek Church*, p. 52f. "I cannot ascertain with any degree of certainly that he (Stearns) was at Grassy Creek earlier than 1757, when he visited the church and explained to the brethren his plan of forming an Association. . . . Elder James Reed . . . was a delegate from Grassy Creek to the first meeting of the Sandy Creek Association in 1758.

A matter connected with the Sandy Creek Association and the Separates was brought before the Charleston Association at its meeting in 1762, by Rev. Philip Mulky, who, as we have seen, went from Deep River in 1759 with his traveling church to South Carolina, first to Broad River and two years later to Fair Forest. In a letter to the Charleston Association this year he proposed several queries. Rev. Oliver Hart was appointed to answer. Manifesting then the disposition which it kept up in later years in the time of Richard Furman, the Charleston Association welcomed this advance and showed that it regarded union with the Separates as very desirable. It appointed Mr. Hart, the Charleston minister, and Evan Pugh, the zealous young preacher from the Pee Dee, to attend the next meeting of the Sandy Creek Association and try to effect the union. Here our record ends. No union was made but nothing more is known.[9]

The meeting of so many ministers and from such a widely extended territory and from growing churches and congregations all filled with unbounded enthusiasm gave the Separates a new sense of unity and power. At the fifth or sixth Association, says Semple, they received delegates from some churches as high as the mountains, just what churches and whether in Virginia or North Carolina we do not know, but they already extended from the mountains to the sea.

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[9] *History of the Charleston Association,* by Richard Furman. MS. digest by W. H. Eller.

In 1767 there was a request for a presbytery to constitute a church in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, north of the James River, and in a year or two more, if we may believe Morgan Edwards, the Association extended to the Potomac, and across South Carolina into Georgia. Until 1770, says Semple,

> The sessions were all held in the vicinity of Stearns, and the elder preachers. The younger ones, from Virginia and both the Carolinas, attended constantly, and derived much knowledge and consolation from the conversation of the more experienced. From such accounts as can be had, it appears that these associations were conducted with peace and harmony, and were productive of extensive usefulness.

Two matters of importance came before the session of the Association in 1769. The first was the Regulator troubles, a matter which I have already discussed above and therefore omit here, except to say that it is by no means certain that the action of the Association forbidding under pain of excommunication the members of the churches to take up arms against the legal authorities represented the views of the Baptists in the Hillsboro district. They were far outnumbered by the delegates from the remote churches, among whom was at least one who afterwards got into trouble for preaching that it was wrong for a Christian to bear arms. This was James Childs of Louisa County, Virginia, of whom some account will be found below.

The second important matter to come before this session was the proposal for a union of the Separate Baptists and the Regulars, as the Particular Baptists now called themselves. In Spotsylvania such a reconciliation had been attempted and failed by a narrow margin. Now a proposition for union was brought before the Association and caused a lengthy debate.

Those Separates who opposed union in Spotsylvania had argued, and probably argued here, that the Regulars were not sufficiently particular in small matters such as dress, the dress of women, which was an objection that the Separates had against union with the Baptists of the Kehukee Association three years later. A more serious and real objection was that the Philadelphia Confession, some parts of which they considered objectionable, might come to bind them too much. The majority of the Regulars of the Ketockton Association favored union with the Separates and had sent three of their members, Messrs. Garrett, Major and Saunders, to the Sandy Creek Association of 1769 with a letter of which Semple gives the following extract:[10]

> *Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:*
>
> The bearers of this letter can acquaint you with the design of writing it. Their errand is peace, and their business is a reconcilation between us, if there is any difference subsisting. If we are all Christians, all Baptists, all New-lights, why are we divided? Must the little appellative names, Regular and Separate, break the golden band of charity, and set the sons and daughters of Zion at variance? "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," but how bad and how bitter it is for them to live asunder in discord. To indulge ourselves in prejudice, is surely a disorder; and to quarrel about nothing is irregularity with a witness. O, our dear brethren, endeavor to prevent this calamity in the future.

After the discussion named the proposal of "this excellent letter" was rejected by a small majority. Thus union was delayed until 1787 in Virginia, and in North Carolina division still continued through the period of the Revolutionary War in the Yadkin region, where the Regulars were far less numerous than the Separates. In the Albermarle section of North Carolina, however, the union came much sooner, beginning in 1777, as will be told when we come to the account of the Associations of that region.

At this time the Separates generally were Arminians while the Regulars were pronounced Calvinists. But in a few years the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, standing as a constant declaration of Calvinism, began to prevail. In the General Association, which in 1770 succeeded the Sandy Creek among the Virginia Baptists, this credal difference all but caused a fatal division in 1775. Though the matter was, so far as known, never brought to issue in the Sandy Creek Association, gradually the greater number of them had become Calvinists before Benedict was writing in 1810.[11]

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[10] *Virginia Baptists*, p. 46.

Devin[12] gives a church covenant, which he indicates was supposed to have been written by Shubal Stearns about the year 1757. Though the main body of it may be due to Stearns, the preamble and concluding paragraph contain Calvinistic elements which must have been added after the discussion of the matter in 1775 in the General Association, of which Grassy Creek was a member. It reads:

> Holding believers' baptism; laying on of hands; *particular election of grace by predestination of God in Christ;* effectual calling by the Holy Ghost; free justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ; progressive sanctification through God's grace and truth; the final perseverance, or continuance of the saints in grace; the resurrection of these bodies after death, at that day which God has appointed to judge the quick and the dead by Jesus Christ, by the power of God, and by the resurrection of Christ; and life everlasting. Amen. (I give in italics the portion which in my view Stearns would never have written.)
>
> 1st. We do, in the presence of the great and everlasting God who knows the secrets of all hearts, and in the presence of angels and men, acknowledge ourselves to be under the most solemn covenant with the Lord to live for him and no other. We take the only living and true God to be our God, one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
>
> 2d. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the revealed mind and will of God, believing them to contain a perfect rule for our faith and practice, and promise through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to make them the rule of our life and practice in all church discipline, acknowledging ourselves by nature children of wrath, and our hope of mercy with

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[11] *History of Baptists,* II, 107. "They now have become generally, and some of them strenuously Calvinistic."

[12] *Grassy Creek Church,* pp. 43ff.

God to be only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, apprehended by faith.

3rdly. We do promise to bear with one another's infirmities and weaknesses, with much tenderness, not discovering them to any in the church, but by gospel rule and order, which is laid down in Matthew 18:15, 16, 17.

4th. We do believe that God has ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel; and we call heaven and earth to witness that we without the least reserve, give up ourselves through the help and aiding grace of God's Spirit, our souls and bodies and all that we have to this one God, to be entirely at his disposal, both ourselves, our names and estates, as God shall see best in his own glory; and that we will faithfully do by the help of God's Spirit, whatsoever our consciences, influenced by the word and spirit of God shall direct to be our duty both to God and man; and we do by the assistance of Divine grace, unitedly give ourselves to one another in covenant, promising by the grace of God to act towards one another as brethren in Christ, watching over one another in the love of God, especially to watch against all jesting, light and foolish talking which are not convenient, (Eph. 5:4)—everything that does not become the followers of the holy Lamb of God; and that we will seek the good of each other and the church universal for God's glory; and hold communion together in the worship of God, in the ordinance and discipline of this church of God, according to Christ's visible kingdom, so far as the providence of God admits of the same: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," but submitting ourselves unto the discipline of the church, as a part of Christ's mystical body, according as we shall be guided by the word and Spirit of God, and by the help of Divine grace, still looking for more light from God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, believing there are greater mysteries to be unfolded and shine in the church beyond what she has ever enjoyed: looking and waiting for the glorious day when the Lord Jesus shall take to himself his great power, and "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

This covenant we make with full and free consent of our minds, believing that through his *free and boundless grace* it is owned of God and ratified in heaven, before the throne of God and the Lamb. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen, and amen.

It is probable, however, that in most Separate churches the covenants were much simpler, as almost certainly during Stearns's lifetime they were free from Calvinism. The following copied by the clerk as the first record of Abbott's Creek church at its reorganization in 1783 is much more likely to represent such theology as Stearns wrote or approved. It reads:

> Believing the Old and New Testament to be the perfect rule for life and practice and 2ly Repentance from dead works and 3ly Faith towards God and 4ly The doctrine of baptism and 5ly laying on of hands and 6ly the perseverance of the saints and 7ly The resurrection of the dead and 8ly Eternal judgment.

This seems to be only a preamble but it doubtless contained about all the theology of the complete covenant. It has bad literary style, while the Grassy Creek Covenant is a highly finished document. But we are prone to believe that the latter, omitting the Calvinism, really reflects the views of Stearns as to what a church should be,—a body of Christians who have unreservedly surrendered themselves to the service of God, living in sweet charity towards their brethren, seeking each the good of the other and of the church as a whole, supporting the ministry of the word, holding what they have and themselves always at the disposal of the Lord, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, submitting themselves to the discipline of the church, as a part of Christ's mystical body, guided by the word and Spirit of God, looking for more light from God and believing that greater mysteries are still to be revealed. If Stearns wrote or inspired this covenant he had a sublimity of soul which few men have attained. In the light of it we get a better understanding of the wonderful personality and power with which Edwards credits him, and see how worthy he is to be regarded as a peer of those other able and inspirational founders of great religious movements, most of whom like Stearns had a mystical element in their souls, and who dwelt in a larger light than is given to ordinary mortals, and saw visions of future glories for the church not revealed to common eyes.

To return to the meetings of the Association, in 1770 it met at Grassy Creek, in Granville County. According to the rules of procedure, no action could be taken except by unanimous approval of the delegates present. At this meeting for three days unanimity could be reached on nothing, not even on the election of a Moderator. At the end of the third day, after a day of fasting and prayer, it was unanimously agreed to divide the Association into three, one for each of the States of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. That for North Carolina kept the name of Sandy Creek and has kept it unto this day. With regard to this division Morgan Edwards had this to say:

> The cause was partly convenience, but chiefly a mistake which this association fell into relative to their power and jurisdiction; tion; they had carried matters so high as to leave hardly any power in particular churches, unfellowshipping ordinations, ministers and churches that acted independent of them; and pleading "That though complete power be in every church yet every church can transfer it to an Association"; which is as much as to say that a man may take out his eyes, ears, etc., and give them to another to see, hear etc. for him; for if power be fixed by Christ in a particular church they can not transfer it; nay, should they formally give it away yet it is not gone away.

According to Benedict, it was the good old Mr. Stearns himself who was the principal promoter of this improper assumption of power by the Association. He had been schooled in his New England home into accepting just such arbitrary dealing by the church councils. We do not know just in what particulars the concerns of the churches were interfered with, but it is evident from the language of Edwards that one of the matters in which Stearns felt it his duty to assume authority was in the ordination of ministers. We have seen above that in the early years he exercised much care in this regard. Until the Association was formed he alone seems to have determined who should be ordained and who not. Afterwards it would have been natural for him to transfer such matters to the Association, though his influence doubtless continued to be decisive. There can be no doubt too that he exercised it in such a way as to keep some unworthy men out of the sacred calling. This would naturally give offense, especially when some one powerful with his own church was thus excluded. It is still a question with Baptists just what are the rights of churches to ordain men for the ministry, and how is the best method to determine the question of their fitness. Yet in this day the question is far simpler than it was in the first years of the Sandy Creek Association. Now it is pretty well known what are Baptist principles and with published confessions of faith it is easy to check lack of conformity thereto. But in the days of Stearns the principles of the Separates were such as he preached. That first Stearns himself and afterwards the Association of the churches he had founded should have insisted on a strict conformity both by churches and those they ordained was not only wise but necessary. Otherwise, there would have soon arisen as many standards of faith as there were churches and ministers.

It is evident, however, that the Association had come to interfere in the more domestic concerns of the churches. One instance of this is the resolution in regard to taking up arms against the legal authorities. It would not be thought proper today, nor was it proper in 1769, for any Association to order the excommunication of members for any cause. That is the concern solely of the individual churches. It was doubtless the meddling of the Association in such matters that created the annoyance which led to the division of 1770. When the General Association of Virginia assembled the next year in its first meeting it was organized on the unanimous agreement that "the Association has no power or authority to impose anything upon the churches, but that we act as an advisory council." But even this Association took some precautionary measures as to the ordination of ministers. In the Sandy Creek Association, after the division, the former arbitrary measures were soon abandoned.[13]

There is little record of this Association from this period until 1805 when the minutes were first printed the minute book of the preceding years having been burned.[14]

The first meeting of the Association after the division was appointed for the church at Haw River.[15] In 1772, according to Benedict,[15] the Association contained nine churches: Sandy Creek, Little River, Shallow Fords, Haw River,[16] New River, Southwest, Grassy Creek, Trent, Lockwood's Folly.[18] These churches had ten branches, most of which afterwards became independent churches.

Our next check on this Association is furnished by Asplund in his various editions of his *Register* for the years 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793 and 1795.[19] At this time the Sandy Creek

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[13] Benedict. *History of Baptists,* II, 53.

[14] Purefoy. *Sandy Creek Association,* p. 74: "From its origin, in A.D. 1758, to A.D. 1805, we have not been able to find any document of the association. From its organization to 1805 its proceedings were never printed; they were recorded in a book annually, which was consumed by fire in the house of Brother William Lightfoot, which was burned in 1816."

[15] Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* p. 47.

[16] *History of the Baptists,* II, 106.

[17] Benedict has "Slow River," clearly a mistake for Haw River, in which he has been followed by Purefoy and other Baptist historians. Morgan Edwards has Haw River.

[18] Benedict was wrong in supposing that Grassy Creek was a member of the Sandy Creek Association after the division. Devin says: "Grassy Creek church, after the division of the Sandy Creek Association, associated with the Virginia brethren, first in the General or Middle District Association till 1788, then in the Roanoke till 1794, when the Flat River Association was organized. Since that time it has been a member of that body." *Grassy Creek Church,* p. 74. Grassy Creek is not, however, in Semple's list of the churches of the General Association for 1771.

[19] John Asplund, the author was a Swede, who had become a member and assistant pastor of the church at Ballard's Bridge, Chowan County. About 1790 he made a tour of the Baptist churches of North America, traveling in eighteen months 7,000 miles, visiting 215 churches and 15 Associations, and becoming personally acquainted with 250 Baptist ministers. He called the first edition of his work *The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America to the First of November, 1790.* It gave for each State by counties a list of the Baptist churches, indicating their order as General, Six Principle, etc., and the Association to which each belonged, the year in which it was constituted, its ministers both ordained and licentiates, and the number of its members. Each successive edition

Association contained no church east of Chatham County. Doubtless the churches in eastern North Carolina had been prevented by the disturbances of the Revolutionary War from keeping up their intercourse with the churches further west. By 1790 New River, Trent, and Lockwood's Folly were members of the Kehukee Association, while Southwest had become extinct or had been merged with some other church of other name. Grassy Creek was a member of the Roanoke Association, most of whose churches were in Virginia. To this and the Strawberry Association belonged one church in Wake, Newlight, and the other Baptist churches of the counties adjoining Virginia from Granville as far west as Surry. West of the upper Yadkin sixteen churches were in the new Yadkin Association. The churches in Rutherford County belonged to the Bethel Association most of whose churches were in South Carolina. Three churches of the Sandy Creek Association were in Chatham County, being the church of Haw River with 320 members, much the strongest church in the Association, still under the care of Elder Elnathan Davis, who had as his assistants the licentiates Thomas Brown, Jesse Buckner, Thomas Cate, Solomon Smith, Isaac Hailes,——Ray, and William Weatherspoon; the church at Rocky River, formerly a branch of the Haw River church but constituted a distinct church in 1776, and having now 45 members under the care of Francis Dorset, a licentiate; and the church at Bear Creek, constituted in 1786 and having fifty-five members under the care of Elder Sherwood White. In Randolph the only church belonging to the Association was Sandy Creek with 25 members under the care of John Welborn, a licentiate. The church of Abbott's Creek in Rowan County had been reconstituted in 1777 and

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was fuller than the preceding, that for 1793 giving the number of members of churches not only for that year but for the three preceding years, and filling in the dates of constitution for many churches which are not found in the first editions. A copy of the 1793 edition is in the library of the American Baptist Historical Association at Chester, Pa.

was again a member of the Association with 80 members under the care of Elder Thomas Pope, who was to continue many years in his most successful pastorate. Elder Joseph Murphy was now pastor of Deep Creek in Surry County, which had only 25 members, but unlike other churches in this section continued with the Sandy Creek Association. In the year 1793 the church at the Forks of the Yadkin in Rowan County was reconstituted with 45 members under the care of Jesse Buckner, a licentiate from the Haw River church, and joined the Sandy Creek Association. Further south the Baptist churches in the counties of Montgomery, Anson and Mecklenburg (Cabarrus) constituted an important part of the Association. In Montgomery these churches were Little River, with only 15 members, without pastor; Rocky River, to which Asplund assigns 1758 as the date of its constitution probably confusing this church with its parent church Little River.[20] In 1790 Rocky River had 189 members under the care of Rev. Edmund Lilly, a distinguished patriot of the Revolutionary period, who had as his assistant William Kindell. A third church in Montgomery was that at the mouth of the Uwharry River with 44 members under the care of Rev. William McGregor, who was still pastor of the church in 1806.[21] In Anson County the church at Pee Dee River belonged to the Sandy Creek Association. It had 110 members under the care of Elders Daniel Gould and William Dargan, assisted by a Mr. Bennet, a licentiate, who was soon after ordained and moved to Georgia. Two strong churches in Anson about this time became members of the Charleston Association. To complete the list of the churches of the Sandy Creek at this time Asplund gives two in Mecklenburg (Cabarrus), Coldwater constituted in 1790 with 40 members under the care of John McCabe, a licentiate, but three years later under the care of John Culpepper, also a licentiate, and Society Meeting thirty-five members but without pastor.

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[20] Little River, according to Semple, dates from 1758. Asplund gives 1787 as the date of its constitution, which was probably the date on which Rocky River became a distinct church. Since the latter was now much the stronger church it was easy for Asplund to consider it the older.

There is some confusion about the church called the Forks of the Yadkin. The account given in the text is based on Asplund for 1793. Edwards mentions Forks of the Yadkin as a branch of Shallow Fords in 1772. Possibly this was east of the river and is the church listed by Asplund. But there was another Forks of the Yadkin organized in 1793, a member of the Yadkin Association, whose pastor was Elder Benjamin Buckner.

[21] Purefoy, *Sandy Creek Association,* 77.

Thus in 1790-93 the Association contained twelve churches and more than nine hundred members. It was strongest in Chatham County, but hardly less strong in Anson and Montgomery. Its ablest pastors were Elder Joseph Murphy of the Deep Creek church, Elder Elnathan Davis of the Haw River church, Elder George Pope of Abbott's Creek, Elder Daniel Gould of Pee Dee and Elder Edmund Lilly of Rocky River of Anson County.

Asplund says, further, that in these years the Sandy Creek Association corresponded only with the Georgia Association. It was holding two meetings a year. In 1793 the occasional meeting was at Uwharry in Montgomery County, on August 7. Elder Joseph Murphy preached the sermon, and Brother John Lawler was chosen Scribe (Clerk). It had its regular annual meeting the same year on October 24 at Abbott's Creek. Who delivered the sermon is not indicated. John Lawler was again chosen Scribe.[22]

The churches of the Sandy Creek Association had some beliefs and practices peculiar to themselves in the early years, some of which they retained for more than a quarter of a century. In the first years they held to the so-called nine Christian rites; namely, baptism, the Lord's supper, love-feasts, laying-on of hands, washing feet, anointing the sick, right hand of fellowship, kiss of charity, devoting of children; and had ruling elders, elderesses, deaconesses, and weekly communion. With reference to such of these matters as were peculiar to the Separates Benedict says:

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[22] Asplund, *Register,* Vol. V, 67.

> It must not be understood that all the churches in this body were strenuous or even uniform in the observance of this long list of rites, all of which however, appear to be suggested by the Scriptures; nor did those who maintained the whole of them refuse communion with their brethren who neglected a part; and this indifference in some has been succeeded by a general neglect in all, so that the greatest part of the nine Christian rites, and especially those of them which were of a peculiar nature, together with the offices of elderesses, and deaconesses have fallen into disuse. But the ordinance, as they esteem it, of the office of ruling elders they still maintain.

We are not, however, to infer that ruling elders and laying on of hands were peculiar to the Separate Baptists. An article on the laying on of hands is one of the American additions in the Philadelphia Confession, being due to the strong Welsh influence. In this Confession, Chapter XXXI, it is declared that "laying on of hands (with prayer) upon baptized believers, as such, is an ordinance of Christ, and ought unto be submitted to by all such persons that are admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper." Most of the oldest churches in this country, whether General or Particular, according to Benedict,[23] practiced the laying on of hands on all newly baptized members. Many of the Particular Baptist churches of North Carolina held to the custom, though some of them in this respect failed to conform to the Century Confession.[24]

Ruling elders at that time were general and not exceptional in the Particular Baptist churches if we may believe Morgan Edwards.[25]

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[23] Benedict, *Hist. of Baptists*, ed. 1848, p. 365, note.

[24] Morgan Edwards, Introductory remarks on the General Baptists of North Carolina. See also Burkitt and Read, *Kehukee Association*, p. 173.

[25] Morgan Edwards, *Ibid.* Burkitt and Read, *Ibid.*, p. 17f., say: "The churches of the Kehukee Association, at first, had Ruling Elders. But it has a great while been the opinion of most of the churches belonging to that Association that there are no Ruling Elders mentioned in the Scriptures distinct from Teachers, who are Elders. Therefore the practice of having Ruling Elders, distinct from the ministers is laid aside. This subject has often been debated in the Association, and the only reasons they have assigned for not having Ruling Elders, when those queries have been dis-

According to Devin, in the Grassy Creek church, and presumably in other Separate Baptist churches the "ruling elders" did not exercise the same functions as those of the same name in the Presbyterian churches of today. They were laymen elected by each church for itself to assist the minister in the management of the church, with spiritual rather than temporal functions, and did not exercise more authority than any other member, differing from deacons little except in name.[26]

One of these rites, that of devoting children, was very popular with the early Separate churches. Benedict has this to say of it:

> This rite was founded on the circumstance of parents bringing their children to Christ, etc. It was thus performed: As soon as circumstances would permit, after the birth of the child, the mother carried it to meeting, where the minister either took it in his arms, or laid his hands on it, thanked God for his mercy, and invoked a blessing on the child, at which time it received its name. This rite, which by many was satirically called a dry christening, prevailed not only in the Sandy Creek Association but in many parts of Virginia.

Our writers on early Baptist history omit much that we should like to know. Especially we should like to learn just what influence these churches had on their membership

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cussed, are, 1. The word of God nowhere points out the qualifications of such officers, as is the case with Ministers and Deacons. 2. No example of any being called, nor time when, and manner how they were ordained to office. No work prescribed in the word of God for them to do. The Minister's work is pointed out, 'To teach, to rebuke exhort,' &c. The Deacon's work prescribed, viz., 'To serve tables.' But no work pointed out for a Ruling Elder."

[26] Morgan Edwards mentioned the following Particular Baptist churches in North Carolina as admitting both laying on of hands and ruling elders. Hitchcock—on the Pee Dee. Kehukee, Pasquotank (Shiloh), Toisnot, Bear Creek (Dobbs), while Tar River (Granville), Lower Fishing Creek, and Upper Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) admitted ruling elders but not laying on of hands. Of the Separate Baptist churches Edwards found only two that admitted all the nine Christian rites and the full tale of officers, ruling elders, elderesses, deaconesses. These were Sandy Creek and Haw River; Shallow Fords admitted six of the nine, while all admitted ruling elders and laying on of hands. A Particular Baptist church at Dutchman's Creek in 1777-87 had ruling elders.

and communities. In general we are told that such men as Stearns, Murphy, Marshall, Elnathan Davis, the ministers, lived pious and godly lives. For the rest we have only tradition or inference. And the tradition is uniform that the members of these Separate churches were held to a strict morality. The churches were the guardians of the morals of their members, and saw that the impure and the unclean were without the pale. The almost savage sternness of some of this discipline has come down even to this day, or at least to days within the memory of men and women now living, and shows how exacting were the terms of church membership in those days. Thus the church set the standards for morality in their communities. In the wide stretch of Chatham and in fact, in all the section between the Haw and Pee Dee rivers, the Baptist churches alone with the exception of the Quakers, ministered to the moral and religious needs of the people. For this they had to rely almost altogether on the preaching of the gospel and the weekly communion service. They had no literature, no periodicals, no Sunday schools. It was the services of these churches alone which stood between the unlettered people and religious and moral degeneration. Very few parents could instruct their children in the Scriptures; probably Bibles were few in those days. There were no catechisms; only a few teachers kept schools here and there. But out of it all developed that sturdy and clean-lived people that was found occupying this section early in the next century, a people among whom prostitution was all but unknown, though children were sometimes born out of wedlock. In cases of such dereliction among its members the church was inexorable; the mother, as well as the guilty father, was excluded. But if afterwards she lived a correct life she was restored to the membership and the affection of the church.

It must not be supposed that the Separate Baptist churches of North Carolina were as a whole made up of people of an inferior social rank, as they were said to be in Virginia.[27] Even in the eastern section of the State they did not seem to merit Tryon's contemptuous reference to them. In Onslow, for instance, practically the whole population were Baptists, and the minister of the New River church, Elder Ezekiel Hunter, was an influential member of the Assembly. Further west, in Chatham and Surry, except for Quakers the Separate Baptists had proselyted the whole population. Though much depleted by emigration, the population of these counties has remained constant in character from the earliest days. For the most part the people are industrious, law-abiding, contented farmers who own their own land, and have all the virtues of the sturdy, self-respecting settlers from whom they descended. Their young men have fought in all our country's wars. They were at Vera Cruz and Buena Vista, at Malvern Hill and Gettysburg.

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[27] Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia,* 115, says, "The Separate Baptists occupied in the popular mind a very definite social status. They had the reputation of being the meanest of the mean—a poor, illiterate, ignorant and awkward set of enthusiasts." Although this judgment was not altogether justified yet it prevailed at the time.

## XVIII

## THE KEHUKEE ASSOCIATION

We now return to the Particular Baptists, who after the rise of the Separates began to call themselves Regular Baptists, the name by which they will be called hereafter in this work.

In 1751, shortly before the transformation of the North Carolina General Baptist churches into churches of the Regular order, the Charleston Association was organized. Within a few years it had gathered into its membership nearly all the Regular Baptist churches in North Carolina. According to the account of Morgan Edwards, with which that of the History of the *Charleston Association* by Wood Furman is in practical agreement, the constituent churches were Charleston, Ashley River, and Welsh Neck. Other churches were added—in 1752, the Eutaw church; in 1755, the churches at Catfish, near the present town of Latta, and Lynch's Creek; the next year that of Greenville, and in 1757 that of Cashaway on the Pee Dee; the following year, 1758, Stony Creek, Bladen County, Kehukee, and Three Creeks; in 1759 Yadkin and Coosawhatchie; in 1761, Great Cohara, Fishing Creek, Toisnot, Tar River, Red Banks.[1] In the next year, 1762, says Mr. Edwards, eleven of these churches withdrew to form other Associations. Of these the following will be recognized as North Carolina churches: Bladen County, Kehukee, Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), Yadkin (Jersey Settlement), Great Cohara, Toisnot, (Lower) Fishing Creek, Redbanks, Tar River, Three Creeks. As many as ten of the nineteen churches in the Association in its first decade were located in North Carolina.

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[1] In a digest of Furman's history, in manuscript, arranged by years, by W. H. Eller, in Wake Forest College Library, it is said that Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) was added in 1758; while the last North Carolina churches including Lower Fishing Creek joined in 1760. With this Benedict agrees, except as to Reedy Creek.

It was no accident that the North Carolina churches had joined the Charleston Association. In the session of the Association of 1755 the destitute condition in North and South Carolina was considered and it was recommended to the churches to make contributions for the support of a traveling missionary to labor in destitute places. Rev. Oliver Hart, the pastor of the Charleston church was at the same time authorized, if a sufficient sum could be raised, to procure a suitable person for the missionary work. In this quest Mr. Hart visited the Philadelphia Association and induced Rev. John Gano to undertake the service. Mr. Gano had previously been in South Carolina on his visit in 1754 and had preached in the presence of the great Whitefield. He now returned with Mr. Hart in time to attend the meeting of the Association in November, 1756, and was cordially received. According to Benedict, who follows closely the account of Furman:

> The Association requested Mr. Gano to visit the Yadkin settlement in North Carolina first, and afterwards to bestow his labors wherever Providence should appear to direct. He devoted himself to the work: it afforded ample scope for his distinguished piety, eloquence and fortitude; and his ministrations were crowned with remarkable success. Many embraced and professed the gospel. The following year he received from the Association a letter of thanks for his faithfulness and industry in the mission.[2]

Thus it appears that the churches of the Charleston Association as well as those of the Philadelphia contributed to send a missionary to North Carolina. We have already seen that the church at the Jersey Settlement called Gano as their pastor, who came to them the next year and remained until the Indian incursion of 1759-60 caused him to leave, and the church was broken up.

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[2] *History of Baptists*, II, 135.

From Furman we learn some other details of interest to North Carolina Baptists. Stephen Hollingsworth organized the church in Bladen County in January, 1756. This would indicate that he had already been preaching in North Carolina. The *Colonial Records* would indicate that Hollingsworth had come to the Province as early as 1735, when he filed a petition for 640 acres of land in Bladen County. Ten years later he or a man of the same name asked for a grant of 600 acres in New Hanover as his due for six white headrights.[3] Morgan Edwards says that he won Rev. Henry Ledbetter to Calvinism, and that this occurred as early as 1751. Probably he was a convert of the Welsh Neck Baptists. In 1759 he assisted Elders Jonathan Thomas of Toisnot and Thomas Pope of Kehukee in the constitution of the church at Great Cohara on the Regular Baptist order. After this we hear no more of him.

The Three Creeks church was so called because the congregations which composed it were located on the Three Creeks, Swift, Middle and Black, which rising in the southern part of Wake County flow through Johnston—the whole course being in Johnston before Wake County was erected in 1771. The name Three Creeks had been dropped by 1790, but the church or one branch of it continued under the name Swift Creek, which it still keeps. According to Asplund, it was founded in 1757, thus being the oldest church in Wake County. In the history of the Charleston Association it is said to have been founded by Tully, probably Elder Thomas Tully, who in 1755 was preaching in Bute County.[4]

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[3] *Colonial Records,* IV, 56, 58, 763, 804.

[4] *Kehukee Association,* p. 230. On September 25, 1741, Thomas Tully received a grant of 300 acres of land in Edgecombe. *Colonial Records,* IV, 602.

From the beginning it was seen that the distance of the North Carolina churches from Charleston made it very inconvenient for their delegates to attend the sessions of the Association. To remedy this in some measure the Association in 1758 authorized an annual meeting of ministers on the Pee Dee (Welsh Neck), at which there should be the usual order of preaching, and matters of general concern should be considered, particularly those of North Carolina. Their proceedings, however, were to be subject to revision by the regular meeting of the Association at Charleston.[5] Whether any such meeting was actually held does not appear, but it is certain that the arrangement was not satisfactory, for in 1762 the North Carolina churches withdrew to form an Association of their own.

It might have been supposed that these churches would immediately form their Association. Possibly their ministers had meetings annually at which they discussed matters of general concern, but of these there is no record. Burkitt and Read give the date of the organization of the Association—the Kehukee—as "about 1765." But they give no details of meetings before 1772. They only say that about this year the Regular Baptist churches organized the Association having their first meeting at the Kehukee church, at which as being central the meetings were regularly held for some years, and on this account the body was called "Kehukee Association." The date, thus carelessly given, has been assumed as correct by writers on Baptist history.

The correct date of its organization is November 6, 1769.[6] This is rendered certain by the minutes of the first nine years of the Association, discovered about a quarter of a century ago and published in 1904 by Dr. K. P. Battle as the "James Sprunt Historical Monograph," No. 5. The first minutes declares that on "The sixth day of November, Anno Domini 1769, a considerable number of Baptist Ministers and brethren met at Kehukee" for the purpose of considering the organization of an Association modeled on that of the Philadelphia Association. The churches represented were Kehukee, by John Meglamre, William Burgess, Jessie (Jesse) Andrews and Thomas Witherby; Bertie (Sandy Run) by James Abbington, Epham Daniel, Thomas Miers and James Vinson; Falls of Tar River, by Elder John Moore, Elisha Battle, Elias Fort, and William Horn; Toisnot, by Jonathan Thomas; Pitt (Red Banks), by Elder Jeremy Rhame[7] and John Noebell.[8]

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[5] Benedict, *Baptist History,* II, 137.

[6] Morgan Edwards gives the date as August 3, 1769, a discrepancy with the date of the minutes probably due to the fact that when Edwards was at Kehukee three years later the Association was held on the first Monday in August.

A manuscript copy of the minutes above referred to was furnished Dr. Battle by Mr. Joel B. Fort of Adams, Tennessee, from whose letter to Dr. Battle, March 21, 1903, I make the following extracts:

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"In the year 1789, Elias Fort and wife Sarah, with his sons, William, Josiah and Sugg Fort, emigrated from Edgecombe County, North Carolina, seeking homes in the then unsettled West. (They made their homes on the Red River of Tennessee, west of Nashville.)

"Red River Church was organized at the mouth of Sulphur Fork on Red River, District of Mero, Tennessee County, on the 5th day of July, 1791, by Ambrose Dudley and John Taylor.

"On April 27, 1794, the Minutes of the Red River Church show:

"'Received Elias Fort and his wife Sarah by letter of recommendation from the Baptist Church of Christ, near the falls of Tar River in Nash and Edgecombe Counties, North Carolina.' In the back of this old book sear in leaf and worn in cover, will be found the first minutes of Old Kehukey Baptist Association, organized before the Revolutionary War, with Elisha Battle, Elias Fort and William Horn as delegates from Tar River Church. The Minutes are recorded each year (those for 1775 omitted) till 1777, and the place of meeting selected for 1778. But no more is recorded. It is to be presumed that, in the perilous times when the infant nation was fighting for life and existence, these devout people found little time or opportunity to assemble and worship as they had done in the past. After the Minutes cease in 1777, a family record of the Fort Family is found, showing that the book fell into the hands and safe keeping of that family and was thus delivered by them to the first Church organized in Tennessee, to be used as a Minute book. The Minutes of said church are therein recorded till 1826. . . . I have the old book in my possession and am careful of its preservation. The copy I furnish is an exact copy of the original."

[7] Mr. Fort gives Jeremy "Robin," and "Rohm," doubtless an error in copying. Rhame is given by Morgan Edwards and a man of that name was at this time pastor of the Red Banks church. He had come from Catfish Church, S. C., of which he was pastor from its organization in 1755 (Furman). According to Edwards, Catfish was constituted in 1752.

[8] Morgan Edwards' notebook names Pasquotank (the present Shiloh) as one of the constituent churches, and does not name Red Banks. According to the minutes, Pasquotank joined the Association in 1771.

In addition the Association admitted to seats in the sessions "as assistants" Zacharias Thompson and Laurence Winfield from Upper Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), though for some reason this church did not become a regular member of the Association until 1772.

The organization was not effected until after some discussion. The benefits of an Association were urged, union and communion being regarded as especially useful in keeping the widely scattered churches in the common faith, while they could appeal to the Association in cases of doubt or distress. Perhaps, taking counsel of what they had heard of the dictatorial attitude towards the churches assumed by the Sandy Creek Association, these delegates at Kehukee were very careful to declare that the new Association would pretend to be no more than an advisory council, "disclaiming superiority, jurisdiction, coercive right or infallibility." They further agreed that the churches should send as delegates only men of intelligence and good judgment, especially in matters of Scripture.

In a plan of association adopted at this time it was stated (1) that the Association should consist only of messengers sent by the churches, ministers and judicious brethren, whose expenses were to be borne by the churches sending them. (2) In letters brought by the messengers, which should be their credentials, the state of the churches should be indicated, the number of those received by baptism and letter, as well as losses from death, letter and excommunication, and the total present membership. There should be included all questions and suggestions. (3) Questions, except interpretations of Scripture, should be decided by vote, while all messengers should have the right to speak after addressing the Moderator. (4) Churches were to be admitted to the Association on application accompanied by a declaration of faith. (5) The Association was to meet annually at the Kehukee church on the Monday following the first Sunday in August (This date was soon changed). A full record of the proceedings to be kept and a copy of the minutes together with a Circular Letter and information gathered from the letters as to the state of the churches was to be sent to every church. (6) The Association adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

This first session organized with the election of Jonathan Thomas of Toisnot church as Moderator and Elisha Battle of the Falls of the Tar as Clerk. The only record of business was with reference to Rev. Charles Daniel, the minister of Lower Fishing Creek, a church which at this time was not a member of the Association. By his own consent, however, he came to a "legal trial," and by order of the Association he was suspended from communion and silenced from preaching until he should be restored.

The Association now entered upon several years of growth. There were no new churches added the next year, but the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church continued the relationship begun the first year until 1772 when it regularly joined the Association. Other churches whose delegates sat in on the meetings were those of Burch's Creek, Virginia (1771), and Amelia County, Virginia (1771)—probably both, certainly the latter, of the Separate order. The church at Red Banks was not represented after the first meeting until 1774, when the notation was made that it had no pastor and the delegates sent were Wm. Traves and John May. In 1771, the church in Pasquotank (Shiloh), represented by its pastor Rev. Henry Abbot and Joseph Creech, was admitted. The next year, 1772, in addition to the admission of the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church already mentioned the Association added the following churches: Sussex County, Virginia, represented by Rev. John Meglamre and others; the church at Bear Creek in Lenoir County, represented by Rev. Joshua Herring, Major Croom and Abraham Baker; and a church in Brunswick County, Virginia, under the care of Rev. Zacharias Thompson, who at the first session sat in as a visitor from the church at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek). In 1773 the church in Pungo, Virginia, with Robt. Lane and Augustus Lane as delegates was admitted. In the next year, 1774, two other churches were received. These were a church in the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Mill Swamp, represented by Rev. David Barrow and one in Craven County represented by its pastor, Rev. James Willis. In the same year Rev. Henry Ledbetter in behalf of the church of Tar River in Granville County made application for admission but the record does not show that the church was admitted. Thus in five years the Association had increased from five to thirteen or fourteen churches.

During these first five years we find a considerable number of able ministers connected with this Association. Among them were Rev. Jonathan Thomas, the gifted pastor of Toisnot church, John Meglamre and William Burges, associated as pastors of the Kehukee church, James Abington, pastor at Sandy Run, Jeremiah Rhame of Red Banks, John Moore, Sr., of the Falls of the Tar; John Moore, Jr., of Three Creeks; Henry Abbot of Pasquotank; John Thomas of Toisnot; William Walker of Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek); Joshua Herring of Bear Creek church, Lenoir County, and Lemuel Burkitt of Bertie.

Of these men sketches will be given below. It was at the session of the Association of 1773 that we first find Lemuel Burkitt, then a young man of twenty-three years. Already his talents and character must have been known and respected, for at this his first meeting he was made clerk of the Association. For many years he was to be most prominent in Baptist affairs in this section.[9]

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[9] John W. Moore in his manuscript history of the North Carolina Baptists in the library of Judge T. M. Pittman, has this to say in introducing Burkitt. "When the Baptists of America were then in travail over the grave differences which made two peoples what should be one a man of extraordinary endowments became conspicuous in the churches of the Kehukee

Of laymen who attended these early meetings the most conspicuous were those from the Falls of the Tar, Elias Fort, Elisha Battle, and William Horn. It is to Elias Fort that we owe the preservation of the minutes which give us certain information of these first years. Both of the others were distinguished in the service of the State and the cause of liberty. Both were members of the Halifax Congress which in 1776 adopted the first State Constitution. Battle was born in Nansemond County, Virginia, but had come to North Carolina when he was twenty-four years old. As early as 1756 he was appointed a justice of the peace. From that time until his death he served the Province and State in many capacities, as a member of the General Assembly in 1773, of the State Senate from 1777 and thereafter for several sessions, and, in 1788, as a member of the Convention on the adoption of the Federal Constitution. He died March 6, 1799, in the 76th year of his age. We shall find his name often in the course of our relation. Horn in addition to his services in civil life was a colonel of militia in Colonial times.[10]

Rev. Jonathan Thomas served as Moderator during the first four years while Rev. John Meglamre filled that office in 1773 and 1774 and at an occasional meeting of November, 1771. The clerk for the first three years was Elisha Battle, for 1772 William Andrews, and thereafter until 1775 Lemuel Burkitt. The Association continued to meet for the first three years near the first Sunday in August changing from Monday to Saturday in 1772.

In the period before 1775 several important matters came before the Association. One of these relates to political life. Governor Josiah Martin had come to the Province as the successor of Governor Tryon in the summer of 1771. What-

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Association. Of all the many thousands who have lived and died in the Baptist faith in North Carolina he did most for its advancement. This man, the Rev. Lemuel Burkitt, was born in 1750 in the county of Chowan."

[10] Battle, Notes on the Kehukee *Minutes*, etc.

ever may be said of him otherwise, the records will bear out the assertion that he was much less dictatorial than his predecessor in office, and showed none of that disposition that characterized Governor Tryon to regard the masses of the people as minions. Though at first prejudiced against the Regulators by the representations of Tryon and the members of his Council, Martin soon began to manifest a spirit of conciliation towards them which was as gratifying to the people of the Province generally as it seems to have been offensive to the members of the Council. For the Regulator spirit was by no means confined to the people of Orange and adjacent counties, but extended all over the Province. It was especially strong in the region where were found the churches of the Kehukee Association. A gentleman familiar with affairs in North Carolina writing from London in July, 1771, said that the regulating spirit had begun to make its appearance years before in the Albemarle and that he would not have been much surprised to hear that the battle had been fought on the Pasquotank rather than on the Alamance.[11] Wherever there were Baptists there was a democratic spirit and sympathy for those who had stood for their rights at Alamance. Accordingly, when it was known that Governor Martin had adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the Regulators the Kehukee Association felt called upon to show its appreciation, and at its session of September, 1772, authorized the following letter to him:

*To his Excellency Josiah Martin, Esq., Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Province of North Carolina:*

The Humble Address of all the Ministers and Elders of the Baptist Society, who associate annually in Halifax County in the Province aforesaid, in behalf of themselves and many hundreds of their brethren.

It is with unfeigned pleasure we acknowledge the happiness with which we are blessed in common with other inhabitants of this Province under your Administration of government, but we beg leave in a more particular manner to express our gratified sentiments of the protection we enjoy in exercise of our religious and civil liberties, for which it is our duty and shall be our constant endeavor to distinguish ourselves as loyal subjects to our most gracious Sovereign, and useful members of society. We hope this address will not be considered for a customary compliment, but a tribute of acknowledgment due to your merit from the experience we have had of your public conduct. It is our prayer to the Almighty that as he has placed you in a most distinguished station he would most eminently guide and direct you in all your actions and bless you with prosperity here and everlasting happiness hereafter.

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[11] *Colonial Records,* IX, 12, letter of Alexander Elmsley to Samuel Johnston.

Signed at our Association in Halifax County, Sept. 17th, 1772.

JONATHAN THOMAS, *Moderator.*
ELISHA BATTLE, *Clerk.*

We appoint our brethren Jonathan Thomas, Henry Abbott, William Horn, Elisha Battle, John Thomas and William Burgess to present this address.

To which his Excellency was pleased to make the following answer.

*To the Ministers, Elders and Brethren of the Baptist Society in North Carolina:*

Gentlemen:—I received with pleasure this mark of your approbation of my public conduct, which my duty to my Royal Master calls upon me to make as much as possible conducive to the happiness of his Majesty's people in this Province. From the consciousness of steadily aiming to discharge that duty faithfully I derive a real inward satisfaction. The tolerating spirit of the British Government, and the security it gives to the civil and religious liberties of the subjects are blessings of which you seem to entertain a just sense and cannot be too highly valued. Your intended constant endeavor to distinguish yourselves as loyal subjects to our most gracious Sovereign and useful members of the community are highly commendable and will be certain(ly) crowned with success as they shall be properly directed. I return you my hearty thanks for your pious good wishes to me and shall hope a continuance of them.

JOSIAH MARTIN, GOV.

Lest this letter seem to some to be prompted by an abject and ignoble spirit it may be recalled here that at least three of those entrusted with its delivery were prominent patriots in the days of seventy-six, and members of the Convention that wrote the Halifax Resolution of April 12, 1776, and later framed the State Constitution. These three were Henry Abbot, Elisha Battle and William Horn.

In addition to their sympathy for the Regulators these Kehukee Baptists had reasons of their own for showing appreciation of the attitude of Governor Martin. Governor Tryon had not concealed his hatred of the Baptists. It was doubtless because of his known hostility to them as a sect which was in no way to be tolerated and "a scandal to common sense," that the actions to harass them of which Morgan Edwards speaks arose about five years previous to this time. Edwards says that at that time the court summoned about 72 persons to appear against them; the Baptists were charged with blasphemy, riots and heresy. But on examination the court found the charges so ill-grounded that it soon dismissed the whole matter, seemingly ashamed of the prosecution. "And," says Edwards, "well they might; for the blasphemies the Baptists were charged with turned out to be Scripture expressions, and their heresies sound doctrines; the riots appeared to be raised, not by the Baptists, but by the prosecutors who disturbed their assemblies." Unfortunately Mr. Edwards left the place of this prosecution untold. The only Baptist minister of this time whose name is connected by tradition with persecution of this kind was the Rev. James Brinson who had his church on the Neuse and who as its representative joined the Association in 1776. It is therefore probable that it was he that suffered in this way.

In addition the Baptists of this section remembered some other recent manifestations of hostility to the Baptists, the most recent being the discrimination shown against them at the last session of the Assembly, when the bill to allow all Protestant ministers to perform the marriage ceremony was rejected while that to allow such a privilege to the Presbyterian ministers was passed, even though it had a suspending clause and was not allowed by the Crown. Such discriminations as these had made the Baptists of Kehukee realize the full force of a complaint later made by a distinguished citizen of the Meherrin section that, though the Baptists in the colonial period were ten times as numerous as the Presbyterians, "they were still treated by the civil authorities as if they were not Christians at all. Their existence was no more recognized in legal and legislative processes than were the creeds of the Cherokee Indians."[12] Viewed in this light the letter to Governor Martin was more than an expression of appreciation for the enjoyment unmolested of the rights of British subjects. It was also a declaration that the Baptists were sensible of the wrong done them by the former Administration and that any effort to repeat those wrongs would be resented by them, now a large and organized body of intelligent Christians.

The minutes show that at this time the churches of the Kehukee Association had such problems as usually arise in churches. There were some of their members who were interested in Biblical and theological puzzles and insisted on vexing the Association with such questions as who is Melchizedek. They also wanted to know about the right of women to vote in conference, the Association disapproving. Other questions related to moral obligations in the life of that day. Is it right to buy a lottery ticket? Should the Hebrew Sabbath be observed by Christians? Other questions related to matters of church discipline, several of them carrying their own answer by implication and seemingly submitted to secure the express condemnation of the Association for wrongs already committed. One such question was as to whether a minister should forbear to speak in a matter of dispute before a church for fear of offending some member. In general, the answers given to the questions show much insight and wisdom.

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[12] John W. Moore in his MS. History of N. C. Baptists. Cf. Weeks. *Church and State in North Carolina,* p. 48: "We may summarize the work done so far by saying that in 1776, by a slow and laborious process, some recognition of Dissenters had been wrung from the Churchmen. This recognition was confined to Presbyterians and Quakers, while the Baptists although strong and vigorous, were entirely unrecognized."

The Association had hardly been organized a year when a question arose that after five years was to lead to a serious difference of opinion and finally in 1775 to a division. This question first took the form of what should be the relation to Separate Baptists, and in consequence of the discussion of this question what should be the proper qualifications for membership in the churches of the Association. It was known that the Separates insisted on a converted membership, and the Regular Baptists were supposed to do the same. But in point of fact, if we may believe Burkitt and Read,[13] they had not been careful to do so. Although at the transformation of the churches of this section from General to Particular Baptists only a tithe of the membership had on reëxamination been admitted, yet after a few years the old unconverted members had slipped back into the folds and the last state of those churches, if not worse than the first state, was such as needed correction. Some of the ministers were still baptizing men and women into the membership of their churches on the same evidence of conversion that had satisfied them when they were of the General Baptist order, that is, if a person manifested a desire to be baptized they considered it a sufficient evidence that he had experienced saving grace. Furthermore, some of those who were ministers confessed that they had been baptized before they were converted and in some instances had begun to preach while yet in their sins.

A consciousness of this defect in the character of their membership was brought home to these churches by the presence near them of Separate churches in which membership was limited to those approved after a strict examination before the whole church. The membership of the Regular churches found themselves attracted to the Separates and very early began to seek union with them. In August, 1771, a question came up as to the propriety of the members of the churches of the Association communing with Separate Baptists. Hearty approval was given. At this same session, desirous of fellowship and a general communion, the Association appointed three of the leading ministers, Jonathan Thomas, James Abington and John Meglamre,[14] as delegates to the next Separate Baptist Association (General Association) in Virginia, which that year met at Rev. David Thompson's church in Louisa County.

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[13] *Kehukee Association*, p. 40f.

The Association was induced to take this action by Rev. Jeremiah Walker, one of the most distinguished of the Separate Baptist preachers. It is said that he was a near relative of Rev. William Walker of Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek).[15] Though probably a native of North Carolina he had for several years been in Virginia and had there established a reputation second only to that of Rev. Samuel Harris. He was now pastor of a church in Amelia County. It seems that he had already won the church of his kinsman, Rev. William Walker, to the Separate Baptist view, and on that account the Fishing Creek church did not for the first few years become a member of the Association, but had in attendance delegates who were, in the minutes, termed Assistants. Rev. Jeremiah Walker himself was in attendance at the session of August 1771, and though of another order and only a visitor he was allowed the privilege of the floor, and it was on his motion that the appointment of delegates to attend the Separate Association was made. That he should have been accorded such a privilege is sufficient evidence that he was possessed of the remarkable talents ascribed to him by Semple. Though he had not had the advantage of a classical education he was a man of superlative original genius, in that respect the equal of Rev. Silas Mercer. "In talents as a preacher," says Semple, "he was equaled by few of any denomination. His voice was melodious; his looks were affectionate; his manner was impressive and winning; his reasoning was close and conclusive; his figures were elegant, well chosen, and strictly applicable; all of which advantages were heightened by the most unaffected simplicity. In private conversation he was uncommonly entertaining and instructing to all, but especially to young preachers. Affable with all sorts of people, he was beloved and admired as far as he was known."[16] Such was the man who led the Kehukee Association to seek union with the Separates. The General Association of Virginia was to have its meeting in September, and it was expected these delegates would attend; seemingly for the purpose of receiving a report from them the Kehukee Association appointed an occasional meeting to be held at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) on the 16th of the following November (1771).

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[14] So the minutes. Burkitt and Read omit Abington's name, probably because he did not attend. He died soon after.

[15] According to Semple, Rev. Jeremiah Walker was born in Bute (Warren) County, N. C. Edwards says that he was born in Fauquier County, Virginia.

The meeting was duly held, but only three churches of the Kehukee Association were represented by delegates. These were the churches of Kehukee, Toisnot and Tar River. In addition to the church of William Walker two Virginia Separate Baptist churches had messengers at this meeting who sat in as Assistants. These churches were those of Burch's Creek and that of Amelia County, represented by Rev. Jeremiah Walker, who became Clerk of the meeting, while Rev. John Meglamre was made Moderator. Both the delegates who had attended the Virginia Association, John

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[16] *Virginia Baptists,* p. 386.

Meglamre and Jonathan Thomas, were present. But it is evident that the plans of Rev. Jeremiah Walker had somewhat miscarried. The Separates of Virginia in general were not as ready as he for union with the Kehukee Association, and instead of making provision for immediate union which Walker seemed to hope to be empowered to effect at the Fishing Creek meeting, they seem to have taken the matter under advisement. Later they appointed delegates to make certain representations to the Kehukee Association of which I shall speak presently. Accordingly, at this meeting no union was possible, but some matters of church discipline and government were discussed and disposed of in a way that indicated that Regulars and Separates were agreed on the necessity of keeping the membership of the churches to an orderly walk.[17]

The minutes of the next regular session of the Association at Kehukee say nothing of a report of the delegates who attended the General Association. But the rebuff of the Separates was already known, and seemingly as a reaction some churches which had probably had Separate sympathies heretofore now joined the Association. These were Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), Raccoon Swamp, Sussex County, Virginia, now under the charge of Rev. John Meglamre, and Brunswick County, Virginia, under the charge of Rev. Zacharias Thompson, who had formerly been at Fishing Creek. In addition a church at Bear Creek in Lenoir County, North Carolina, under the charge of Rev. Joshua Herring joined the Association at this time.

But though the minutes are silent on the matter, Burkitt and Read[18] say that delegates from the General Association were present at the 1772 session of the Association. It seems, however, that these authors with their usual carelessness as to dates are in error here. According to Semple, who is noted for his accuracy, and who was writing with the minutes of the General Association before him, the delegates to the Kehukee Association were appointed at the session of May, 1773, held at Dover meeting house in Goochland County. Four ministers were appointed to visit the Kehukee Regular Association and churches, in order to know their standing, and make report.[19]

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[17] It is to be regretted that Semple has no account of the proceedings of the Session of the General Association at which the Kehukee delegates appeared. It cannot be doubted that the eloquent Jonathan Thomas and the wise John Meglamre did their part well, but their failure is nothing surprising. The Separates were suspicious from the first, especially of those who in public speech did not use their tones and gestures.

[18] *Kehukee Association*, p. 38f.

The four delegates referred to above were Samuel Harris, E. Craig, John Waller and David Thompson. Of these only Revs. Elijah Craig and David Thompson attended the meeting of the Kehukee Association. Craig, who was one of the most popular of the ministers of the Separates, had a church in the upper part of Orange County, Virginia, and was later to become one of the two Apostles of the district north of the James River; for during a few years the Separates of Virginia made the experiment of having Apostles, which they decreed to be New Testament officers. Coming to Kehukee with some manifestation of the spirit of the apostolic office which he was soon to assume, Craig went beyond the instruction given him by his Association, which was only to make an investigation and report, and deciding for himself that the churches of Kehukee Association were unfit for union with his Association he stated the reasons why the Separates could not commune with the Regulars. According to Burkitt and Read they were as follows:

1. The Regulars were not strict enough in receiving experiences when persons made application to their churches for baptism in order to become church members.
2. They refused communion with Regular Baptist churches, because they (the Separates) believed that faith in Christ Jesus was essential to qualify a person for baptism, yet many of the Regular

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[19] *Virginia Baptists,* p. 55. Unfortunately the report is lost along with the minutes of the next meeting of the General Association.

churches had members in them who acknowledged they were baptized before they believed.

3. The Separates found fault with the Regulars for their manner of dress, supposing they indulged their members in superfluity of apparel.

These, say Burkitt and Read, with a few other nonessentials were the reasons they refused communion with the Regulars. The Association seems to have let Craig and Thompson, if he also spoke, have their say and go their way. It took no action in consequence, but went about its other business as usual rejoicing in the addition of the church at Pungo, Isle of Wight County, Virginia, which until 1762 had been a branch of the Pasquotank (Shiloh) church, but in that year had been constituted a distinct body. At this time they had no regular pastor, but were served by Rev. Henry Abbot as occasional pastor.[20]

Among the members of the session of 1773 was Rev. Lemuel Burkitt, who had come as one of the delegates from Pasquotank (Shiloh). For the next third of a century he was the most influential man among the Baptists of North Carolina and gave direction and character to Baptist development in the eastern half of the State. He was the son of Thomas and Mary Burkitt and was born in the Yoppim neighborhood, near Edenton, April 26, 1750. Into this region, about the year 1764, came the ministers of the Pasquotank (Shiloh) church, first Rev. John Burges and then Rev. Henry Abbot, preaching the Gospel. Among the first converted was Joseph Creecy, of whose baptism I have already told, and soon after him Thomas Burkitt and his wife Mary were baptized. There was as yet no constituted church in the Yoppim neighborhood nor a meeting house, but the Pasquotank ministers on their visits held their meetings in the house of Joseph Creecy or that of Thomas Burkitt. About this time the young Lemuel Burkitt was awakened and converted. He at once began to hold religious services at his father's house, reading at each of his meetings a sermon of Whitefield or Williston. Soon, however, he began to write his own sermons and to engage in public prayer. In this way he was led by degrees to abandon the purpose he had of entering the profession of law, and became convinced that it was his duty to become a minister. Accordingly, he was baptized in July, 1771, in the Pasquotank River, by Rev. Henry Abbot, and in less than two months thereafter had become a Baptist minister. For two years he was assistant to Mr. Abbot of Pasquotank (Shiloh) and served especially the region between the Chowan and Pasquotank rivers, in which were several branches of the Pasquotank church. Among the churches to which he frequently preached during this period were those at Knobscrook (near Elizabeth City), and Flatty Creek (Newbiggin, near Nixonton), in which section Burkitt had a stated appointment at William Freshwater's. At Ballard's Bridge, about twelve miles north of Edenton, the work was begun by him. In the year 1772 he had been with Rev. Henry Abbot on a preaching tour through Amelia County, Virginia, where Rev. Jeremiah Walker had a church of Separate Baptists. On their return they had parted at Suffolk, Abbot making his way towards Camden, and Burkitt towards Edenton. As Burkitt had set out on his long road, fifty-five miles, and rode along alone, his heart was much moved as he thought of the people's destitute state and lack of religious ministrations. His feelings were intensified when a boy of nine or ten, at the house where he stopped for the night, near Ballard's Bridge, challenged the whole company to a game of cards with the pack which he had in his hands. That night Burkitt had a dream, in which it seemed that an angel of the Lord appeared to him holding a map in his hands on which were marked with great distinctness the three roads leading from Suffolk to Edenton, Great Bridge and the head of Perquimans River respectively. This angel seemed to speak ordering him to "Call for Elder Jonathan Thomas or Elder Dargan, and make appointments, and offer to preach the gospel to these people twice in each place; and if they refused he should be clear from their blood." Burkitt at once applied to Dargan, and they made appointments and preached at the places indicated by the angel in the dream. Among the many converts was a Mr. Welsh, who joined the church at Wiccacon, at that time a branch of Dargan's church at Cashie, and who later became a pious and zealous preacher of the gospel.[21]

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[20] *Kehukee Association*, p. 251f.

Another youthful minister who attended the session of the Kehukee Association in 1773 was David Barrow. He had come as a delegate of the church in Brunswick County, Virginia, under the care of Rev. Zachary Thompson. He was even younger than Burkitt, being now barely twenty years of age, and equaled him in zeal and ability. Before another meeting of the Association he had, on July 2, 1774, been ordained pastor of the church known as Mill Swamp in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and was later to be associated closely with Burkitt in the formation of the new Association, and his close friend through life.[22]

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[21] *Kehukee Association,* 181, 182, 185f., 188ff., 191ff. See also Pittman's sketch in *Wake Forest Student* XXV, 48ff., in which is printed the sketch of Burkitt found in the minutes of the Sandy Run Church, written soon after his death.

[22] This David Barrow, one of the most distinguished of the early Baptist ministers, was until the dimission of the Virginia churches to form the Portsmouth Association one of the most active ministers of the Kehukee Association. In 1798 he emigrated to Kentucky, where a few years later he was visited by Burkitt. Of him Semple says, *Virginia Baptists,* p. 359f.: "Elder Barrow was called to occupy their pulpit at an early period of his life. Having a strong wish to advance the Redeemer's kingdom, he availed himself of every opportunity to improve his mind. He applied himself to reading, and sought instruction from every quarter within his reach. His progress was very considerable. His preaching and conversation were admired. Mr. Barrow had no notion of preaching barely for the sake of being admired. He sought the salvation of men; he sought it earnestly. Receiving from heaven the bread of life, he dealt out to each one his portion in due season. He traveled and preached far and wide. Jesus was with him and gave him many seals. His spotless character as a Christian greatly aided his pulpit labors. All who knew him at all, knew he was a good

Both Burkitt and Barrow were present when Rev. Elijah Craig and David Thompson as delegates of the Separate Association of Virginia delivered what must have seemed to many of the Kehukee ministers a harsh message. But to their youthful hearts the call for a converted membership made a strong appeal, as it did likewise to the more mature Rev. John Meglamre and Rev. David Thompson. All of these four had been laboring already with the Separate Baptist members and were on terms of warm intimacy with them, all of them except Burkitt in Virginia in close proximity to the churches of the Separates, while Burkitt, as we have seen, had called Rev. Jeremiah Dargan, the pastor of the Separate Baptist church at Cashie, to his aid in an evangelical campaign in Chowan and Perquimans. Though seemingly without any common plan, all of these four began from that hour to bring about the reforms urged by the Separates.

Young as he was and attending the Association for the first time Burkitt was elected its clerk. He was also intrusted with another important matter which was to determine the course of his future life and activities: he was made one of a committee to regulate the church in Bertie County (Sandy Run) which was calling for assistance. The other members of the Committee were Elders John Moore and Jonathan Thomas.

This church at Sandy Run was probably, with the exception of Pasquotank (Shiloh), the oldest at that time in the Association, having, according to the statement made above, been organized by members dismissed from the Meherrin

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man. In the time of the Revolutionary War, Mr. Barrow was a warm Whig; he exhorted his countrymen to face the enemy, and shake off the yoke of British bondage. He set them the example. When dangers pressed, Mr. Barrow voluntarily shouldered his musket, joined the army; and was found ready for the field of battle. . . . He carried his opinions of liberty so far as to think it criminal to hold negroes in slavery. He therefore emancipated all he had." In Kentucky he became the most distinguished minister among the Baptist churches which adopting the view that all slaves should be free withdrew from the Associations. Benedict, *History of Baptists*, II, 248.

church in 1740. For fifteen years it was a church of the General Baptists, but after the transformation of the Kehukee church to the Particular Baptist order Rev. Thomas Pope reorganized it. It is mentioned both by Morgan Edwards and in the minutes as one of the constituent churches of the Association. At that time its minister was the Rev. James Abington. He was converted under the preaching of Pope. In their sketch of him Burkitt and Read say that he had been a man much addicted to sports and gaming, but when converted began to preach the gospel, and some time after about 1764, was ordained pastor of the Sandy Run church. During his pastorate he gathered many members. "He was a man of bright genius, a ready mind, a good voice; and was a Boanerges in preaching the word. He was remarkably gifted in distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel."[23] After a ministry of a few years he died in February, 1772, and his funeral was preached by Rev. Jonathan Thomas.

Being without a pastor the church had fallen into disorder, the number of members was greatly reduced, and divisions arose among them, but a few remained steadfast and orderly. It was these few who had sent the petition to the Association. The committee induced the members of the church to effect a new organization, all the former members undergoing a reëxamination as to their fitness for membership. As a result of this the majority of the members were found worthy of membership and received. The new church chose Burkitt for its minister, a position which he was to hold until his death in 1807. The reorganization was in November, 1773. Early the next year under the preaching of Burkitt, a great revival began which continued for two years and brought nearly 150 new members into the church.[24]

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[23] *Kehukee Association*, p. 33f.

[24] Burkitt's account of this revival is as follows: "Many attended on the word preached, appeared wonderfully affected and an uncommon power was manifest among the people. Some would fall to the ground as sud-

Having the office of minister in this enthusiastic church, Burkitt had an opportunity to begin the reform for which the Separates had insisted as a condition of union. Early in 1774 he led his church in open conference to declare for a purified church membership, urging that repentance and faith should precede baptism, which was indeed an accepted Baptist doctrine, and that the church should therefore exclude those who admitted they had been baptized in unbelief, since an unbelieving adult was no more a proper subject for baptism than an infant. The church was convinced by his arguments and agreed to withdraw fellowship from all churches and persons who held and maintained the contrary doctrine. A few were found in Burkitt's church who asked for a new baptism.

Soon after the Sandy Run church had effected this reformation, it received word that three churches in Virginia belonging to the Kehukee Association had effected a like reform. These were the church in Sussex under the care of Rev. John Meglamre, that in Brunswick under the care of Rev. Zachary Thompson, and the church of Mill Swamp in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, under the care of the celebrated David Barrow, whose church, as we have seen, represented by its youthful pastor had been received at the session of the Association in 1774. Barrow on assuming the pastorate had found the members largely General Baptists, who had been gathered by several preachers of that order who had visited them in recent years, but with his great ability and tact had induced them to accept a reorganization as a Regular Baptist church.

The action of these four churches had been noised abroad before the time for the meeting of the Association and had

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denly as if stricken by lightning, and would to appearance remain in a state of insensibility for hours, not able to move a limb. Some would be taken with a tremor as if they had a violent ague. Others would be so powerfully affected they would be exercised nearly like a person with the hiccough. And many were truly affected at heart who made little or no noise. *Kehukee Association,* p. 186f.

aroused a storm of opposition in several churches. Accordingly, when the reforming ministers came up to the Association, which this year was held in Mr. Moore's meeting house, the Falls of the Tar, in October, 1775, they came with full knowledge that they should have to defend their action. But they were prepared. The day was Saturday. It seems that the trouble began even before the organization of the Association, and the question was which of the parties, the four reforming churches, or the others, composed the Association, and "a great dissension arose." The non-reforming churches claimed that as they had not changed they should be considered the Kehukee Association, whereas the reformers insisted that they were alone entitled to be considered the "genuine Association" since they had never departed from the original plan upon which the body was founded. They then urged with much force that as all held that faith was a prerequisite for baptism those in the churches who had been baptized before they believed were not baptized in accord with God's word. Hence, so many of them as were in the churches were unbaptized members, and any church did wrong in admitting them to communion and the church so doing had violated the plan of Association agreed to at the first session, especially that part of it which stipulated "immersion for baptism and that on profession of faith and repentance, congregational churches and their independency, reception into them upon evidence of sound conversion," etc. These arguments were urged by the experienced Rev. John Meglamre and the youthful and eloquent Burkitt and Barrow with such earnestness and power as to win some who had been counted in the opposition.[25] The chief ministers on the non-reforming side were Rev. John Moore, William Burges, John Thomas and

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[25] Mr. J. W. Moore, in his manuscript history remarks, "It is sad to think how much has been lost to posterity and the world at large in the fact that no report was made of Elder Burkitt's speeches on that momentous occasion." But see *Kehukee Association*, pp. 41ff.

Thomas Daniel. None of them was the equal of Burkitt or Barrow even had they been arguing on equal terms and not been confronted with the irresistible logic used by the youthful zealots. The non-reformers could only say that the trouble complained of had existed from the first; that none of the churches now was failing to require faith as a prerequisite for baptism into membership; that it would entail much hardship and injustice to apply the rule after all these years; and that as the members complained of were already getting old in a short time the evil would cease; and on that account the reformers had done wrong to bring on the trouble. To this the reformers replied that they acted from conscience which impelled them to try to conform to God's word and that they "were under very great impression to begin a reformation in the churches." As has been said, the argument of the reformers prevailed and won to their side Col. William Horn of the Falls of Tar church, whose minister, Elder John Moore, was in the opposition. This Col. Horn coming to the defense of his view got into a heated argument with Elder Thomas Daniel, who had succeeded his brother, Rev. Charles Daniel, as pastor of the church at Lower Fishing Creek. Thus the meeting ended in a wrangle, but it seems that the accession of Col. Horn from the Falls of Tar church had given the reformers a majority of the delegates present. At any rate they held the meeting house, while its pastor, the Rev. John Moore, with the delegates from the other non-reforming churches retired to a grove and there organized a separate meeting, which however, the next day met in a private house.

A minute of the Kehukee Association, the non-reforming part, says, "The Proceedings of the Association in 1775 is loste." Therefore we know nothing of it. It seems that nothing of consequence was done either in their meeting or in that of the reformers, except to engage to keep up the order and rules, both parties now claiming to be the Kehukee Association.[26]

The non-reforming churches appointed their next meeting at the church at Toisnot, near the present Elm City, and there the delegates assembled on August 24, 1776. The list of the churches and delegates present shows that the leaders had not been idle, even amid the stirring political scenes that were then occupying the people's attention. In place of the four churches which had gone with the reformers they had recruited a new church in Duplin (Sampson County, Great Cohara, now Rowan) which was represented by its pastor Rev. Edward Brown, who had gone out from the Kehukee church; the church on Neuse represented by Rev. James Brinson; the church in Craven (Swifts Creek) represented by Rev. James Willis; a church in Johnston represented by Rev. John Moore, Jr.; the church at Sandy Creek, a branch of the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church; and the church of Lower Fishing Creek, which indeed had sent up its pastor the Rev. Thomas Daniel the previous year. In addition the church at Red Banks again sent delegates to the Association at this meeting. It is plain then that the leaders had been very active. It may be observed that while the delegates of the Falls of Tar church had split in the meeting of the former year, at this meeting it had a full delegation including Elisha Battle, whose name, however, does not appear in the list of delegates for the next year. Of the eleven churches which were represented in this meeting all except one, Bear Creek, reported baptisms and number of members. These indicate a healthy condition of the churches even in that day of great political excitement. The ten churches reporting were Falls of Tar, Duplin (Great

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[26] Mr. J. W. Moore says that "it is a singular and melancholy coincidence that every one of the old churches (Kehukee, Toisnot, Lower Fishing Creek and Falls of the Tar) who thus sinned against the light in a struggle for a converted membership was found fifty years later at war with the same Newlight congregations, and finally separating from them in opposition to missions and education." MS. history.

Cohara, now Rowan in Sampson County), Toisnot, Kehukee, Lower Fishing Creek, Three Creeks in Johnston County, Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), Neuse River, Sandy Creek (Franklin County,) Red Banks. Their total number of baptisms for the year was 168, of which 47, 46, 40 were accredited to Lower Fishing Creek, Three Creeks and Toisnot respectively. The total membership was 1,104, the largest being at Toisnot with 340. Edward Brown's church at Great Cohara had increased from 8 to 23 in five years. It is significant that none of the churches organized by the Separates in eastern North Carolina was included in the Association at this time, which would indicate that they were still affiliated with the Sandy Creek Association. There is no further record of proceedings at this session except the appointing the time and place of the next meeting, which was at the Falls of the Tar on October 20, 1777. At the meeting in 1777 Elder John Thomas was elected Moderator and John Battle (son of Elisha) Clerk. At this time one church, that of Flat Swamp in Pitt County, under the charge of Rev. John Page was added. It was at this meeting that the plan for marriage, spoken of above was brought up and approved. The next meeting was appointed for Lower Fishing Creek in October, 1778. Here the minutes end. Whether this group ever held another meeting is not known, but in ten or twelve years nearly all of them had united with the other division of the Association which followed Burkitt and his church at Sandy Run.

I add here short sketches of some who labored in the Kehukee Association before 1778.

John Meglamre was born on January 7, 1730, in Maryland, and was bred a Presbyterian. Coming to North Carolina he was baptized by Rev. William Walker at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) in May, 1765. He was ordained in 1767 and took charge of the Kehukee church in 1768. On May 2, 1772, he resigned this pastorate to assume one at

Raccoon Swamp in Sussex County, Virginia, where he with some others had gathered a church. In 1775 he joined Burkitt in the reforms that resulted in the division of the Association and the formation of the new Association in 1777. Of this latter body he was often Moderator, "for upwards of twenty years," says Burkitt. He continued pastor of the church at Raccoon Swamp as long as he was able to preach. He died on December 13, 1799.

Elder James Abington, pastor of Sandy Run, was a resident of Bertie County. Burkitt and Read say of him:

> Before he became religious, he was a man much addicted to sporting and gaming, and very vicious in his life and conversation. But it pleased God by his great goodness to convince him of his dreadful state by nature, and to reveal his dear Son, Jesus Christ, to his soul; and after he was converted he was baptized and began to preach the gospel. He became a member of the church at Sandy Run, and after preaching some time he was ordained pastor of that church, and was instrumental in gathering a considerable number of members. He was a man of bright genius, a ready mind, a good voice. He was a Boanerges in preaching the word. He was remarkably gifted in distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel. . . . He continued but a few years in the work of the ministry, how long we are not able to say, but at last being taken very ill, he was taken away from the evil to come. He departed this life February, 1772.

Two brothers, John and Jonathan Thomas, were ministers of this Association. Their father, John Thomas, was likewise a minister, and was a justice of the peace. All were members of the Toisnot church. All had been baptized by Dr. Josiah Hart and were at first General Baptists, but at the transformation in 1756 all were converted to the Regular order. Of these by far the most active and able was Jonathan Thomas. He was "a man of talents, very affable in his address and a great orator." He was generally esteemed and revered not only by members of his churches but by all men of character with whom he was acquainted. He was very orthodox and had great facility in reconciling seeming contradictions in scripture. He was also as happy in reconciling differences among members of his churches. He went in all directions from Toisnot preaching and gathered several branches of that church. At the first session of the Association he was chosen Moderator and served in that capacity at several other sessions, a place with which his brother John was honored in 1777. He was on the committee to present the address of the Association to Governor Martin. Towards the end of his life his zeal for spreading the gospel increased. He preached his last sermon at Sandy Run in December, 1773, and with his powerful eloquence melted the congregation to tears. On his return to his home he contracted a cold, from which he died about the first of the following February, 1774, still in his prime of life.[27]

Elder John Moore, Sen., of the church of the Falls of the Tar, was born in Nansemond County, Virginia, August 13, 1717. He was bred a Churchman. He came to the Kehukee region about the same time as Sojourner and was baptized by him in September, 1746. He was a member of the church at the Falls of the Tar while it was still of the General Baptist order, but becoming a Calvinist he won over six others and organized them as a Regular Baptist church in 1757. By 1772 the membership numbered 64. Among them were some of the ablest laymen in the Province, Elisha Battle, William Horn, Elias Fort. Mr. Moore was strongly opposed to the methods of Burkitt and Meglamre in reforming the churches. Afterwards he was a leader in the Association of those churches which refused to follow Burkitt, and was chairman of the committee that drew up the forms to be used in marriages. He seems to have been very active in traveling and preaching. His son, John Moore, Jr. was also a minister, and showed much of the same energy that characterized his father, organizing several churches in Johnston and Wake counties.

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[27] So Burkitt and Read. The minutes show that he was present at the session of the Association in August, 1774.

William Burges, the Kehukee pastor, was the son of the William Burges of Pasquotank (Shiloh) at whose house that church first met. He was born December 24, 1721, and baptized by his father. On May 2, 1772, he was ordained pastor of the church at Kehukee. He "continued a few years in that office, after which he was called home to rest from his labors."

Jeremy Rhame was the first pastor of the Catfish church near Latta, South Carolina, which was constituted in 1752, and became a member of the Charleston Association in 1755. Soon after he came to North Carolina and became pastor of the church of Redbanks when it was constituted as a Regular Baptist church, November 20, 1758. He was very successful in his work and added many members, their number reaching 95. In 1771 or 1772 he moved back to South Carolina, where he seems to have continued his labors with much acceptance, being, according to an old record, one of "three zealous and much approved preachers of the gospel who died in that State in 1805."[28]

William Walker of the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church was one of the most able and active of the ministers. Much about him has already been told. He was born in New Kent County, Virginia, January 24, 1717. He was bred a Churchman. In 1746 he was baptized by William Sojourner at Kehukee. In 1748 he was ordained pastor of the Fishing Creek church while it was still of the General Baptist order. Becoming dissatisfied with his theology he went to Charleston about 1752 and spent a year there getting instruction in Calvinism. After the transformation of the Fishing Creek church he again became its pastor, about 1756, and served in that capacity until his death in 1784. He was very active in the ministry. His church in its early years established several branches which soon became independent churches. One of these was Sandy Creek in Franklin

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[28] Benedict, *History of Baptists*, II, 147.

County. "His labors in the ministry were not confined to Reedy Creek, but he traveled and preached in a number of places, and was the humble instrument of bringing many precious souls to the knowledge of the truth. After he was established in the truth of the doctrine of the gospel, he was never known to court the smiles, nor fear the frowns of any man. God's free, electing, everlasting, unchangeable love through Christ to poor sinners was his favorite theme. . . . He was loved and esteemed by all ranks of people." (Burkitt and Read.)

## XIX

## THE BAPTISTS IN THE REVOLUTION

We now turn to consider the part the Baptists of North Carolina had in the Revolution and the events connected with it. In the concluding pages of their history of the Kehukee Association Burkitt and Read give a summary of the attitude of Baptists toward the State, in these words:

> The Baptists of North Carolina as well as the rest of their brethren in the United States hold it their duty to obey magistrates, to be subject to the law of the land, to pay their taxes, to pray for all in authority. They hold with lawful oaths, and are willing when required to take an oath of God upon them to testify the truth before a court or magistrate, but reject profane swearing. Their religion allows them to bear arms in defence of their life, liberty and property. This society have maintained themselves to be true friends to civil liberty ever since the commencement of the war; and generally speaking in their policies they are republicans.
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> We shall, by way of conclusion, add a sentence from General Washington's answer to the address of the committee of Virginia, in the year 1789:
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> "When I recollect with satisfaction, that the religious society of which you are members have been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution, I can not hesitate to believe that they will be the faithful supporters of a free yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them, that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity."

Any one who would understand the unanimous support which Washington declares the Baptists gave the Revolution must not forget that in North Carolina, as elsewhere, they had in their relations to the Provincial government felt "grievously oppressed by an ecclesiastical establishment."[1]

Like the other colonists they had come to North Carolina to enjoy the large measure of religious freedom guaranteed by the charters; in search of it they had left their homes in England, Massachusetts and Virginia. For the most part they disregarded the laws for the ecclesiastical establishments got on the statute books by sharp practices of governors whether Proprietary or Royal; they felt them to be tyrannical impositions. In this they were encouraged by many even of the Church of England. Among them as well as among Baptists Tryon's energetic measures to promote the Establishment encountered determined opposition. Vestries in strong Episcopalian parishes, such as St. James' (Wilmington) and St. Philip's (Brunswick), refused to receive the ministers Tryon appointed for them. Thus in ecclesiastical no less than in civil affairs there was a democratic spirit among the people of North Carolina.

This democratic spirit was especially strong among the Baptists. Their plan of church government taught them democracy, and led them to be democratic not only in affairs of church but also in those of state. The Baptist settlements of the Province and the people who had been taught by their preachers claimed the right to call their officers to account, manifesting that Regulator spirit which Governor Tryon found so obnoxious to his ideas of government. But his tyrannical measures served one useful purpose: they taught the people the incompatibility of the British system of rule with that democracy in both civil and religious matters which the people of North Carolina regarded as their birthright. They learned that religious and civic freedom go together and are possible only in a country where there is complete separation of church and state. The Baptist people and churches of all the States were quick to realize this. In striking for their freedom from monarchical oppression they were at the same time ridding themselves of the burden and impertinence of an ecclesiastical establishment.[2]

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[1] *Kehukee Association,* 157, Circular letter of Martin Ross 1791.

The issues involved were well understood by the friends of the Establishment. The Episcopalian ministers in North Carolina, having been under the nursing care of the Royal governors, all with two or three exceptions, left the Province upon the downfall of British rule. Many of them were worthy men, but they were strangers in a strange land. They were cultivators of a system which was exotic in the free atmosphere of North Carolina, and when the system went they went. In a tone of sadness and despair Rev. James Reed said:

> I must ingeniously confess that I am heartily weary of living in this land of perpetual strife and contention; such I have found it by the experience of upward of twenty years. Without the benevolence of the Society it would be quite intolerable.[3]

The end of the Establishment in North Carolina had already come. As it was expiring two conceptions of the relations which should exist between church and state began to arise in North Carolina. One of these we may call the Presbyterian conception, the other the Baptist conception. The plan of the Presbyterians was for an establishment not of any one church but of the Christian religion, with a limited freedom of conscience for favored citizens. The Baptists stood for no establishment and full freedom of conscience.

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[2] The attitude and activities of the Baptists of Virginia after August, 1775, may be learned from these words of Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* 62: "The discontents in America, arising from British oppression, were now drawing to a crisis; most of the colonies had determined to resist, and some were for independence. This was a very favourable season for the Baptists. Having been much ground under British laws, or at least the interpretation of them in Virginia, they were to a man favourable to any revolution by which they could obtain freedom of religion. They had known from experience that mere toleration was not a sufficient check, having been imprisoned at a time when that law was considered by many as being in force. It was therefore resolved at this session to circulate petitions to the Virginia Convention or General Assembly, throughout the State, in order to obtain signatures. The prayer of these was that the church establishments should be abolished and religion left to stand upon its own merits. . . . They also determined to petition the Assembly for leave to preach to the army, which was granted." With reference to the granting of the petition of the Baptists to allow their ministers to preach in the army, Dr. Hawks, *Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia,* 138, says: "This, it is believed, was the first step made towards placing the clergy of all denominations upon an equal footing in Virginia." One may find a list of numerous petitions presented by the Baptists either for themselves alone or in company with other Dissenters in a study by W. T. Thom, *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia: The Baptists,* p. 48ff.

[3] *Colonial Records,* IX, 815. Letter of Jan. 7, 1774.

What may justly be called the Presbyterian plan is to be found in a paper entitled "Instructions for the Delegates of Mecklenburg County. Proposed to the Consideration of the County." They are in the handwriting of John McKnitt Alexander, a prominent Presbyterian of Mecklenburg. They bear date of September 1, 1776.[4]

As far as they relate to religion they are as follows:

> 13th. You are instructed to assent and consent to the establishment of the Christian religion, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and more briefly comprised in the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, excluding the thirty-seventh article, together with all the articles excepted and not to be imposed on dissenters by the Act of Toleration; and clearly held forth in the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster; to be the religion of the State, to the utter exclusion, for ever, of all and every other (falsely so called) religion, whether

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[4] So Hoyt, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence,* p. 93, note 3. Hoyt says that Governor D. L. Swain, who had the MSS. in his possession, gave this date for the paper in a letter to B. J. Lossing found in the Bancroft MS. in the N. Y. Pub. Lib. Weeks (*Church and State in North Carolina,* 55) supposed that Alexander's propositions were intended for the Congress that met at Halifax in April, 1776. The Alexander document was first printed in a Charlotte paper in 1838 giving the date September 1, 1775, which was accepted by Foote and Wheeler, and seemingly by Colonel W. L. Saunders, since he placed it among the papers of 1775 in *Colonial Records,* X, 239-42. But it is clear from several references in the paper of Mr. Alexander that it was written after North Carolina had ceased to be a Province and had become a State. It is doubtless just what its caption indicates, a statement of the instructions Mr. Alexander would have had the citizens of the county of Mecklenburg, who met at the courthouse on November 1, 1776, give to their delegates in the State Congress which was to meet at Halifax later in November, 1776, for the formation of a State Constitution. The county meeting adopted a much more comprehensive set of Instructions in two parts, one directed to the Congress to form the Constitution, the other to the General Assembly into which the Congress was expected to resolve itself. *Colonial Records,* X, 870a-f.

pagan or papal;—and that full, and free, and peaceable enjoyment thereof be secured to all and every constituent member of the State, as their inalienable right as freemen, without the imposition of rites and ceremonies, without claiming civil or ecclesiastical power for their source;—and that a confession and profession of the religion so established shall be necessary in qualifying any person for public trust in the State. If this should not be confirmed,—protest and remonstrate.

14th. You are instructed to oppose to the utmost any particular church or set of clergymen being invested with power to decree rites and ceremonies, and to decide in controversies of faith, to be submitted to under the influence of penal laws. You are to oppose the establishment of any mode of worship to be supported to the oppression of the rights of conscience, together with the destruction of private property. You are to understand that under the modes of worship are comprehended the different forms of swearing by law required. You are moreover to oppose the establishing an ecclesiastical supremacy in the sovereign authority of the State. You are to oppose the toleration of popish idolatrous worship. If this should not be confirmed,—protest and remonstrate.

Such were the propositions of Mr. Alexander. They were adopted in modified form and in some parts only by implication at the meeting of the citizens of Mecklenburg at their courthouse on November 1, 1776. The actual instructions as to matters of religion which they gave their delegates to the State Congress were as follows:

19. You shall endeavor that any person who shall hereafter profess himself to be an Atheist, or deny the being of God or shall deny and blaspheme any of the persons of the Holy Trinity or shall deny the divine authorship of the Old and New Testaments or shall be the Roman Catholic religion shall not sustain, hold or enjoy any office of trust or profit in the State of North Carolina.

20. That at all times hereafter no professing Christian of any denomination whatever shall be compelled to pay any tax or duty towards the support of the clergy or worship of any other denomination.

21. That all professing Christians shall enjoy the free and undisturbed exercise of religion, and may worship God according to their consciences without restraint except idolatrous worship.[5]

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[5] *Colonial Records,* X, 870a-f. This set of instructions is said to be in the handwriting of Colonel Waightstill Avery, except two articles which

In the second part of their instructions by which their delegates were to act when the General Assembly was formed, were the following articles:

> 1. You shall endeavor to have all vestry laws and marriage laws heretofore in force totally and forever abolished.
>
> 7. You shall endeavor to obtain a law to prevent clandestine marriages, and that Gospel ministers regularly ordained, whether by Bishops, by Presbyteries or by Association of regular ministers, shall have legal authority to marry after due publication of banns where the parties live.

The citizens of Orange County also furnished their delegates to the State Congress with a set of instructions. These instructions as to religion, very much like those to the Mecklenburg delegates, are as follows:

> Thirdly. We require that in framing the religious constitution you insist upon a free and unrestrained exercise of religion to every individual agreeable to that mode which each man shall choose for himself and that no one shall be compelled to pay towards the support of any clergyman except such as he shall choose to be instructed by, and that every one regularly called and appointed shall have power to solemnize marriages under such regulations as shall be established by law for making the marriage notorious: Provided however, persons who are intrusted in the discharge of any office shall give assurances that they do not acknowledge supremacy ecclesisastical or civil in any foreign power or spiritual infallibility or authority to grant the Divine Pardon to any person who may violate moral duties or commit crimes injurious to the community—and we positively enjoin you that on no pretence you consent to any other religious constitution or that the establishing of this shall be waived, postponed or delayed.[6]

Such were the instructions as to religion given to the delegates from Mecklenburg and Orange to the Congress that formed our State Constitution in 1776. Both sets give evi-

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were in that of John McKnitt Alexander. In many respects the instructions were much more democratic than the Constitution of 1776.

[6] *Colonial Records*, X, 870f-h. The Orange instructions are said to be entirely in the handwriting of Governor Thomas Burke. They are much less comprehensive than those to the Mecklenburg delegates.

dence of Presbyterian influence. Both left the delegates free to vote for an establishment, as proposed by Mr. Alexander, so long as no one was compelled to pay for the support of a church not of his choice. In the Mecklenburg instructions the "idolatrous worship" forbidden was doubtless interpreted by Mr. Alexander to embrace Roman Catholics who, according to his proposition, would have been denied the right to establish their worship in the new State. The Mecklenburg instructions are definite, those of Orange indefinite, in prescribing that only Protestants of a certain type are to have the right to hold office.

There has been so much misunderstanding on the subject that I call attention to the fact that the Presbyterian plan as embodied in the propositions of Mr. John McKnitt Alexander did not contemplate religious liberty; it contemplated an establishment for North Carolina under which only a restricted type of the Christian religion should have the protection of the State, "to the utter exclusion forever, of every other (falsely so called) religion, whether pagan or papal."[7] It was just such an establishment as the Presbyterians of Virginia were strenuously contending as late as 1785 to impose upon the people of Virginia.[8] It would have tolerated only such Protestant sects as conformed to the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession except as provided for in the Toleration Act. How far this is from the Baptist conception of religious liberty may be seen in the fact that Semple, the Baptist historian of Virginia, declares that, "Even this Act of Toleration is a most flagrant violation of religious freedom,"[9] while Elder John Leland, the noted Baptist divine, who labored in Virginia from 1776 to 1790, says with more exactness: "If a creed of faith, established by law, was ever so short, and ever so true; if I believed the whole of it with all my heart—should I subscribe to it before a magistrate, in order to get indulgence, preferment, or even protection—I should be guilty of a species of idolatry, by acknowledging a power that the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, has never appointed."[10]

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[7] Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina,* p. 74, says that these propositions of Mr. Alexander are worthy of notice as *asserting religious liberty.*

[8] Meanwhile a new theory of a State Religious Establishment was devised, and began, in private circles, to be warmly discussed. This theory had its origin with the Presbyterians, and was in their subsequent memorials tenaciously and elaborately advocated. It proposed, not the abrogation of a State Religious Establishment, the measure demanded by the Baptists, but that the State, instead of selecting one denomination, as the Episcopal, and establishing that as the religion of the State, and giving that alone its support, should establish all denominations, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists, as well as Episcopalians, and make them all equally and alike the religion of the State, and to be supported by the State." Howell, *Early Baptists in Virginia,* 165f.

Of all Mr. Alexander's propositions relating to religion the only one to get into the Constitution was that prescribing a religious test for those who should hold office. It forms article thirty-two of that document, and is as follows:

> That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant Religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testament or hold religious principles incompatible with the Freedom and Safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office, or place of Trust or Profit, in the civil Department within this State.[11]

This article was not in the draft of the Constitution which was laid before the Congress by the Committee appointed for the purpose, but was proposed on the floor after the Committee had reported. There it was stoutly opposed and was carried only after a very warm debate, which blew up such a flame that everything was in danger of being thrown into confusion.[12] Only so much of the restrictions on religious freedom proposed by Mr. Alexander or the Mecklenburg Instructions was written into our first Constitution. But except as a threat and a deterrent even this article was ineffective in operation. There is, so far as I know, no record that it was ever used to debar any man from office. In a few years, a Catholic, Thomas Burke, was Governor of the State; a half century later William Gaston, another Catholic, was a justice of the Supreme Court. In 1835 the article was amended by substituting "Christian" for "Protestant."[13]

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[9] *Virginia Baptists,* 32. [10] *Virginia Chronicle,* in Works, 106, note.

[11] Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina,* p. 240, says that it is a matter of tradition that Dr. David Caldwell drew up this article. But it is clear that the article is only a rescript of the Mecklenburg proposition. Possibly Dr. Caldwell reduced it to the form in which it was adopted, for, according to Foote, like his brethren in Mecklenburg he "felt that anti-protestant belief in religion was anti-republican, and therefore not to be encouraged." *Ibid.,* p. 241. Dr. Caldwell as a member of the Convention of 1788 to consider the Federal Constitution, strenuously contended that the Federal Constitution should contain a like Test for office holders. Elliot, *Debates on Federal Constitution,* IV, 199. In a letter of Samuel Johnston found in McRee's *Life of Iredell,* I, 339, it is said to have been introduced by "one of the *members from the back country,*" by which contemptuous designation Johnston may have indicated Dr. Caldwell.

It is only just to the authors of the Mecklenburg Instructions to call attention to the fact that they purposed to give a much larger measure of religious freedom than had been enjoyed by Dissenters in North Carolina. Under their plan no church was to have supremacy, but all churches conforming to certain tenets were to have the support and protection of the State. The objection to their plan was that it gave religious liberty only within certain limits. What the Baptists, and most of the people of North Carolina with them, desired was unrestricted religious liberty. With the Baptists from the organization of their first church full liberty of conscience and complete separation of church and state had been cardinal principles. They had been incorporated by Roger Williams in his scheme for the government of Rhode Island. As the Revolution began the Baptists were greatly moved to see that these rights were recognized by law. Especially did the Baptists of Virginia with numerous petitions and memorials to Conventions and Assemblies plead for religious liberty. And it was a Baptist minister, Elder Henry Abbot, pastor of the church at Pasquotank(Shiloh) to whom is ascribed the authorship of the measures for religious liberty in our first Constitution.

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[12] Johnston's letter quoted in the last note.

[13] A good statement of the Baptist view of religious tests for public office was made by Rev. John Leland, *Op. cit.*, p. 106, note: "Who can look over the constitutions of government adopted in most of the United States without real sorrow? They require a religious test, to qualify an officer of state. All the good such tests do, is to keep from office the best of men; villains make no scruples of any test. The Virginia Constitution is free from this stain. If a man merits the confidence of his neighbors, in Virginia—let him worship one God, twenty Gods, or no God—be he Jew, Turk, Pagan, or Infidel, he is eligible to any office in the state." Such was the provision of Jefferson's famous Statute for Religious Liberty, which was the culmination of his fight and that of the Baptists for religious liberty.

No one will question the statement that the progress of the struggle for religious liberty in Virginia had powerfully influenced Mr. Abbot. Pungo, one of the branches of his church at Shiloh, was in Princess Anne County, Virginia. Several of the churches of the Association to which he belonged were in that State, and he was well acquainted with their leaders, such as Elder David Barrow, a record of whose patriotism may be found in Semple's history. Hence it is certain that Mr. Abbot had a vital interest in and was familiar with the part the Baptists of Virginia had in the struggle for religious liberty in the months immediately preceding the session of the North Carolina Congress which in November and December, 1776, made our first Constitution.

After the Virginia Convention, in June, 1776, had adopted the Declaration of Rights, one article of which was on liberty of conscience, the Baptists of Virginia as well as the other Dissenters became very active in preparing petitions and memorials to be presented to the General Assembly which was to meet in October. Eight days after the adoption of the Declaration of Rights a Baptist church in Prince William County laid a petition before the Convention asking for full religious rights. Soon similar petitions were being made from all parts of the State. The most notable of these was one circulated by the Baptists and signed by about ten thousand people.[14] With reference to these petitioners Hawks says,[15] that some prayed that all church establishments might be put down, while others simply asked to be freed from the payment of parochial charges. Among those who sought "the entire demolition of all laws which made or gave precedence to an establishment," was the Presbytery of Hanover. But most authorities agree that the leaders in the fight for religious freedom in Virginia were the Baptists.[16] The Baptists were also among the first to begin the fight, they were the most determined and consistent, and it was owing to them that the complete victory was won. According to Semple, towards the close of 1774 they began to entertain hopes not only of "obtaining liberty of conscience but of actually overturning the Church establishment, from whence all their oppressions had arisen." Petitions for this purpose were accordingly drawn and circulated with great industry.[17] An Association in Powhatan County in August, 1775, was actuated by a purpose to destroy the hierarchy, and authorized the circulations of petitions to the Convention or Assembly praying that "the Church establishment should be abolished and religion left to stand upon its merits."[18] Hawks also recognized the leadership and unrelenting purpose of the Baptists in the fight for religious liberty. With some bitterness he says:

> Persecution had taught them not to love the establishment, and they now saw before them a reasonable prospect of overturning it entirely. In their association they had calmly discussed the matter,

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[14] A reference to this petition may be found in Fristoe, *History of the Ketocton Baptist Association*, 91. Fristoe says that the "Presbyterians concurred" with the Baptists and that numbers of Episcopalians "sensible of the injustice with which we had been treated, afforded their aid by signing our petition." A fuller statement of this matter may be found in Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790,* Chapter VIII. Many extracts of petitions may be found in Thom, *Struggle for Religious Freedom in Virginia*, 49ff.

[15] *Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 139.

[16] Gewehr, *Op. cit.*, 199; Thom, *Op. cit.*, 38ff.; Semple, *Op. cit.*, 25; Hawks, *Op. cit.*, 137.

[17] Semple, *Op. cit.*, 25.

[18] *Ibid.*, 62.

and resolved on their course: in this they were consistent to the end; and the war which they waged against the church was a war of extermination.[19]

It seems hitherto to have been overlooked that this great struggle for religious freedom in Virginia should have had much influence in North Carolina. For the reasons already mentioned the part the Baptists had had in that struggle must have been known to Rev. Henry Abbot. Not improbably because of his attitude on this very question his countrymen elected him to the State Congresses, the first of which met at Halifax in April, 1776, and the second at the same place in the following November. Though he was a new man in the political world his fellow delegates recognized his worth and appointed him a member of the Committee to draft a Bill of Rights and Constitution for the State. On the Committee with him were the following most distinguished citizens of the State: Richard Caswell, Thomas Person, Allen Jones, John Ashe, Abner Nash, Willie Jones, Simon Bright, Christopher Neale, Samuel Ashe, William Haywood, Griffith Rutherford, Luke Sumner, Thomas Respess, Jr., Archibald McLaine, Isaiah Hogan, and Hezekiah Alexander.

On this Committee he was able to make his influence felt in his purpose to have incorporated in the Constitution such articles as he favored. Doubtless his special interest was religious freedom. He was able the more effectually to win adherence to his views because he was a man of strong mind and gentle breeding, free from suspicion, and of much sweetness of character.[20] The part Abbot had in the making of the Constitutional provisions for religious liberty is indicated by Elder Lemuel Burkitt, his most intimate friend and fellow laborer in the Gospel, who says with reference to it

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[19] Hawks, *Op. cit.,* 137. Even Thom, *Op. cit.,* p. 42, says that the Baptists pursued the Church with a vindictive hatred.

[20] These qualities of character were most happily revealed by Mr. Abbot in the Convention of 1788. Elliot, *Debates on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution.* See also the sketch, *Kehukee Association,* 109.

"to him we owe our thanks, in a measure, for the security of some of our *religious rights.*"[21]

As reported from the Committee on December 6, 1776, the draft of the Constitution did not, as we have seen, contain the article requiring religious qualifications for officers of the State. Its omission was no accident, for it had been recommended by the Instructions to the delegates both of Mecklenburg and Orange, and had doubtless been strongly urged upon the Committee. It seems to have been obnoxious to the Episcopalian members of the Committee as it must have been to Mr. Abbot.[22] But the Constitution as reported and adopted contained two articles of religious liberty which were much in advance of the propositions put forward by John McKnitt Alexander and found in the Instructions to the delegates of Mecklenburg and Orange. The first of these is article nineteen of the Bill of Rights and declares:

> That all men have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God, according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Tradition credits Mr. Abbot with the presentation of this article. The idea was current and the exact language had already been used in the Pennsylvania Declaration of Rights and almost the same in that of Virginia. Abbot's article is the shortest and most forceful of all.[23] It is also far in advance of anything found in the Mecklenburg Instructions. Article twenty-one of those Instructions limits the undisturbed exercise of religion and the right to worship God according to their consciences to "professing Christians" whose worship is not idolatrous worship, that is, to those Christians who are approved Protestants and not Catholics.[24] In article nineteen this right is said to belong to all men, among whom are to be included Christians and those who are not Christians, Protestant and Catholics, even though some might consider them "idolatrous worshippers."

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[21] *Kehukee Association,* 109. In discussing this statement, Weeks, *Church and State in North Carolina,* 58, note, says: "Burkitt was a contemporary and an acquaintance of Abbot, and we may assume that the statement is substantially correct."

[22] See the note above in Johnston letter found in McRee's *Iredell,* 339.

[23] The Virginia article reads as follows: "16. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love and charity towards each other."

It was to article thirty-four of the Constitution proper that Burkitt was most likely referring in his statement that to Abbot are due our thanks for securing our religious liberties. This article, prohibiting an establishment, is an approximation to the Baptist view, and in effect brought complete separation of church and state in North Carolina. It is as follows:

> There shall be no establishment of any one religious church or Denomination in this State in Preference to any other, neither shall any person, on any pretence whatsoever, be compelled to attend any place of worship contrary to his own Faith or Judgment, or be obliged to pay for the purchase of any Glebe, or the building of any House of Worship, or for the maintenance of any Minister or Ministry, contrary to what he believes right, or has voluntarily and personally engaged to perform, but all persons shall be at liberty to exercise their own mode of worship. Provided, that nothing herein contained shall be considered to exempt preachers of treasonable and seditious Discourses, from legal trial and punishment.

This article might seem at first sight to make or permit a general Establishment including all churches and denominations on equal terms as was afterwards proposed in Virginia. But even this was rendered impossible by making all religious obligations personal and voluntary. From the time of its adoption separation of church and state has been practically complete in North Carolina. Even the article which was designed to deny the right to hold office to all except certain classes of Protestants proved only a source of humiliation to many good citizens and was largely inoperative. Thus by one stroke the people of North Carolina were in the beginning of their Statehood secured in their religious liberties. They were free from the religious wrangles that continued to keep our sister State of Virginia in turmoil for nine years longer and which were ended only by the enactment of Jefferson's famous statute justly regarded as the noblest expression of religious liberty ever enacted by a legislature. But though lacking the completeness, the definiteness and the literary finish of the Virginia act article thirty-four of the North Carolina Constitution was equally effective of its purpose.

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[24] Such is obviously the intent of the phrase found in this article, "without restraint except idolatrous worship." Weeks, *Op. cit.*, 56, suggests that article nineteen of the Bill of Rights was due to the effect of the Mecklenburg instructions. He is inconsistent in this, since he later credits Abbot with its authorship. It is strange that he did not see the great superiority of Mr. Abbot's article.

Article thirty-one of the Constitution of 1776 also had a bearing on religion. It reads:

> That no Clergyman or Preacher of the Gospel, or any denomination, shall be capable of being a member of either the Senate or the House of Commons or Council of State, while he continues in the Exercise of the Pastoral Function.

It is not known what considerations led to its adoption or who was its author. Possibly it was a retaliatory measure of those who felt aggrieved at putting a religious test for office in the Constitution. Its effects were far reaching. Under the Constitution of 1776, the only officers for whom the people had the right to vote were the members of the General Assembly, while this body elected all other State and county officers. Accordingly, the denial to ministers of the right to be members of the General Assembly was little short of denying them a part in the government. Under its workings the people were in many instances denied their natural and ablest leaders. Their preachers were often the best men among them and had the training and interests that would have made them good legislators. As it was, the State had to look for its political leadership largely to those who had been trained for the law, while such men as Dr. David Caldwell, Henry Abbot and Green Hill were shut out of the General Assembly and Council of State.

Since I have discussed in another section the resolution introduced by Abbot and passed in the last days of the Congress of 1776 giving ministers of all denominations the right to officiate at marriages, I am omitting discussion of it here. It was the one thing needed in addition to the articles on religion in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution to bring in the day of full religious liberty in North Carolina, except for the petty annoyance of the article prescribing a religious test for civil officers of the State. It is quite fitting that the man who had the leading part in bringing this about should have been a member of that denomination which has always stood for freedom of conscience and separation of church and state. However, we must beware of supposing that all the honor should go to Mr. Abbot. The people of North Carolina of all creeds believed in religious liberty. The indications are that most of the Episcopalians in the Congress gave their support to the religious provisions as adopted. Mr. Abbot was the natural leader because as a Baptist he had been trained to a clearer conception of the principles involved than men of other denominations.

After these distinguished services by a minister of the Baptist faith there is certainly no ground for the sneer of Weeks, that "the Baptists do not seem to have done much for religious liberty in North Carolina."[25]

It was not alone in congresses and conventions that the Baptists of North Carolina showed their devotion to liberty. They did a noble part in the struggle for freedom on the field of action. Owing to the loss of early church records we know the names of only a few of that day who were certainly members of Baptist churches. We have the names of those who were delegates from the churches to the Kehukee Association for the years 1769 to 1777, of other members of Baptist churches found in Morgan Edwards's manuscript history, and of a few others known to be Baptists. Of these few the number of those who can be shown to have been actively engaged in the struggle for independence either in the army or in the civil departments of the State is surprisingly large.

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[25] *Op. cit.*, 46. It is true, however, as Weeks states, that Morgan Edwards took pains to show that the Baptists had no part in the Regulator war speaking as if it was a heinous offence to be a Regulator. Edwards's statement was swallowed whole first by Benedict and then by Purefoy, *History of the Sandy Creek Association*, and by Devin, *History of Grassy Creek Church*. Hufham had a much more just appreciation of the matter.

One of the three ministers in the State Congress that met in Hillsboro on August 20, 1775, was William Hill, a Baptist preacher from Surry County. He left an honored name; one of his sons, William Hill, was for many years Secretary of State.

With Abbot in the Halifax Congress of 1776 were two members of the church at the Falls of the Tar. These were Elisha Battle and William Horn. Of the services of Elisha Battle some account has been given above. For many years thereafter he represented his county in the State Senate. In 1788 he was a member of the Convention on the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and often was called upon to preside over that body. He was justly regarded as one of the State's most able citizens[26] while as a religious leader he merited to the end the confidence and esteem of his brethren.

William Horn had been a colonel of his county in Colonial times. His uncompromising integrity in religious matters is shown by his boldly advocating the reforms urged by Burkitt in the Association of 1775, as already related.

Another distinguished member of the church at the Falls of the Tar was Colonel Henry Hart. He served as a justice of the peace, and on the death of Col. Johnston was appointed Colonel of the Company of Edgecombe, September 9, 1779, in which capacity he served to the end of the war.[27] A member of the same church was Jacob Dickinson who was made a Justice of the Peace by the Halifax Congress of 1776.[28]

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[26] Compare the judgment of Chief Justice Walter Clark, *State Records*, XVIII, v., "The Assembly met Nov. 20, 1786. In the Senate Elisha Battle and Gen. Rutherford were among the leaders."

Turning now to the delegates from the Baptist churches of Pitt County to the Kehukee Association we find a number of names of those who also served the State in the days of 1776. Among these were Colonel Henry Ellis and William Traves of the Red Banks church, Nathan Mayo and Rev. John Page of the Flat Swamp church.

Henry Ellis was on June 23, 1775, elected by the freeholders of Pitt County to serve on their Safety Committee, and was in a few weeks made by that body Captain and Patrolman.[29] That his services in these capacities were highly satisfactory is shown by the fact that on December 20, 1787, he was made Colonel of the Militia of his county.[30] In Colonial days, in 1774, the Assembly had appointed him one of the commissioners to lay out the town of Martinsborough, the name of which was in 1787 changed to Greenville.[31] His brother in the church of Red Bank, William Traves, was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the Halifax Provincial Congress in 1776.[32]

The patriotism of Rev. John Page, who afterwards became pastor of the Flat Swamp church, is sufficiently attested by the fact that on November 3, 1774, he was appointed by the Safety Committee of his county to solicit funds "to aid and support said poor of Boston," while he was elected a member of the Safety Committee the next June.[33]

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[27] *State Records*, XXII, 956; XIX, 50; XVI, 589-90.

[28] *State Records*, XXIII, 993.

[29] *Colonial Records*, X, 38, 99, 451.

[30] *State Records*, XX, 272.

[31] *State Records*, XXIII, 269.

[32] *State Records*, XXIII, 794.

[33] *Colonial Records*, IX, 1081; X, 37. "Elder John Page embraced religion under the preaching of Elder Jonathan Thomas, and became a member of a branch of his church at Connetoe. At what time he was called to the ministry we are not able to say; but exercising his gift for a

Still more distinguished was Colonel Nathan Mayo. He was born September 22, 1742. Being converted and baptized shortly before, he became a constituent member of the Flat Swamp church on its organization in 1776. Since he was a very ardent patriot a plot was made against his life, from which he escaped by the timely warning of his brother Baptists. In the war he became successively Captain, Major, and Colonel of Militia of his county.[34] In a civil capacity he served as Justice of the Peace, and in the Assembly.[35] He was also a member of the Conventions of both 1788 and 1789 on the adoption of the Federal Constitution.[36] Colonel Mayo was greatly esteemed by his fellow citizens and by his Baptist brethren, who often made him Moderator of the Kehukee Association. Late in life he joined the newly established church at Cross Roads on the Conetoe in Edgecombe County, which he served as Deacon, an office he had occupied in the Flat Swamp church. To his last year "religion was the burden of his song." On March 14, 1811, "he departed this life, beloved by many."[37]

In the county of Dobbs (now Lenoir) was the Bear Creek church. Its pastor, Joshua Herring, was made a Justice of the Peace by the Halifax Congress of 1776.[38] Major Croom, a member of this church, was, on September 9, 1775, appointed by the Hillsboro Congress a member of the Committee for the New Bern district, and was active in that office. On February 1, 1779, he was appointed with Jesse Cobb to build a magazine for the preservation of the military

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while, he was at length ordained pastor of the church at Flat Swamp, which was dismissed from Toisnot and became a constituted body. He continued preaching for several years, and his labors were blessed. After finishing the work his Heavenly Father designed him to do, he departed this life October, 1796." *Kehukee Association,* p. 120.

[34] Biggs, *Kehukee Association,* p. 192. The records show that he was made Lieutenant Colonel of Martin County. *State Records,* XX, 272, 460.

[35] *State Records,* XV, 693; XXIII, 994; XXIV, 647.

[36] *State Records,* XXII, 2; XXIII, 37.

[37] Biggs, *Ibid.,* p. 192-93.

[38] *State Records,* XXIII, 993.

stores in the New Bern district.[39] He was a man of some social prominence and probably of considerable wealth, as he was one of the bondsmen of Richard Caswell upon his appointment as Public Treasurer in 1773.[40]

Although the church at Three Creeks in Johnston County was represented in only two meetings of the Association, yet two of its delegates had part in the struggle for Independence. These were John Sanders and Hardy Sanders. We know of John Sanders only that he was in the army,[41] but Hardy Sanders did distinguish service. He was probably a member of the Swift Creek branch of the Johnston church of which Rev. John Moore, Jr., was pastor. For his home was in this section of Wake County. Before Wake was erected from Johnston Sanders had been made a Justice of the Peace of Johnston County.[42]

In the Act of Assembly creating Wake County he was appointed one of the Commissioners of the county.[43] In 1778 and 1779 he represented Wake County in the House of Commons in the State Legislature. In 1781 he was Lieutenant Colonel and addressed a letter to Governor Burke warning him that David Fanning was on his way to capture him, which warning Burke disregarded and became Fanning's prey. In the same letter he suggested that the proper way to stop the operations of the Tories was to block the approach to Wilmington by putting troops on both sides of the Cape Fear, which was the plan finally successfully used after Fanning had been allowed to continue his depredations for more than a year.[44] A year later Sanders was sheriff of Wake County.[45]

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[39] *Colonial Records*, X, 215, 415, 417; XIII, 683-84.

[40] *Colonial Records*, IX, 592-93. Samuel Peacock, another wealthy member of this church, built a bridge over the Great Contentney on the road "leading from Johnston to Edgecombe" in 1751. *State Records*, XXIII, 369. Another member, John Rows, was in the militia in 1754, a cornet. *State Records*, XXII, 331.

[41] *State Records*, XVII, 247.

[42] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 149.

[43] Laws of 1770, Chapter XXII.

[44] *State Records*, XIII, 610.

[45] *State Records*, XVI, 208-09.

The church at Fishing Creek in Halifax County was also represented in the early meetings of the Kehukee Association by men who were friends of liberty. The most prominent of these was Matthew Rabun (Raborn). In the Continental army he was a staff officer of the county of Halifax.[46] He was also in 1781 one of the Commissioners of Halifax County.[47] Nathaniel Tatum of the Kehukee church was a Sergeant Major of militia in the Revolutionary period.[48]

In Burkitt and Read's *History of the Kehukee Association* may be found casual references to the patriotism of other Baptists. Among these was Joshua Freeman, who in 1777 became a member of the church at Wiccacon in Bertie County. In this period he was a captain of militia. He was a man of great wealth and influence. Another prominent member of the church at Wiccacon who was also known and honored for his patriotism was Elder Samuel Harrell. He was a major of militia of Hertford County and later Clerk of the Court. In 1788 he was elected to represent his county in the Convention to consider the Federal Constitution.[49] An able historian[50] has said that there were many Baptists of the Kehukee Association in the armies of Generals Jethro Sumner and Isaac Gregory, both of them men of this section. Doubtless there were many young men in the churches of the Kehukee Association who shared the patriotic devotion of Martin Ross, of whom Rev. Thomas Meredith said: "At an early age he obeyed the call of his country; cheerfully exchanged the comforts of home for the hardships and dangers of camp and joyfully contributed his aid to the attainment of that civil and religious liberty, which was then an object of ardent and doubtful contention.[51] In fact, the the part of the State where the churches of the Kehukee Association were found was the most undivided of all, with the possible exception of the Presbyterian settlements, in its attachment to and ardent support of the cause of freedom. Illustrative of the general attitude were conditions in Bute (Warren and Franklin) counties, where the Baptists had begun their missionary labors as early as 1750 and where now was found the strong church of Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) and its numerous branches, such as Sandy Creek and Poplar Spring. In this county "the king had no friends, except a few Scotch merchants, and vagrant peddlers."[52]

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[46] *State Records*, XV, 450.

[47] *State Records*, XIV, 489.

[48] *State Records*, XVII, 1042.

[49] *Kehukee Association*, 118, 106.

[50] J. W. Moore, MS. History of North Carolina Baptists, Chapter VI.

[51] Sketch in the Minutes of the Chowan Association for 1828.

Another consideration will show that the Baptists generally were the recognized friends of freedom. In the Provincial period hardly a Baptist had held an office of honor or profit. But with the opening of the Revolution the Baptists of this section at once came into prominence and a surprisingly large number of them were honored with high public trusts both in the civil and military departments of the State. And they did their part so well as to win the confidence of all friends of liberty and to make them the trusted leaders to whom the people turned to maintain their rights in the next great crisis, that of adopting the Federal Constitution in 1788 and 1789. At that time the people of North Carolina believed that their liberties were in danger; that militarism might be introduced; that trial by jury might be denied; that their religious liberties for which they had fought in the War of the Revolution no less than for their civil liberties were in jeopardy. At this time of crisis and doubt the people turned to the Baptists as the well known champions of both civil and religious liberty and sent many of them as their representatives to the Conventions which were to pass on the question as to whether the State of North Carolina should accept the newly formed Constitution of the United States. Among those Baptist delegates were Rev. Henry Abbot, the author of the article guaranteeing religious freedom in our State Constitution, Rev. Lemuel

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[52] Sabine, *The American Loyalists,* p. 28.

Burkitt of Bertie, Rev. William Lancaster and John Norwood of Franklin, Rev. Francis Oliver of Duplin, Rev. Samuel Harrell of Hertford, Rev. James Vinson of Northampton, Colonel Nathan Mayo of Martin, Colonel Nathan Bryan of Jones, and Elisha Battle and William Fort of Edgecombe.[53]

Our records are very scant as to the part played by the Baptists of the Sandy Creek Association in the events of the Revolution. We have already seen that in the great Baptist territory of Chatham County there were very few Tories. It is generally true, as has been said by Mr. John W. Moore, that loyalists were to be found only in regions where the Baptists had made no impression.[54] Most of the ministers of this Association were actively engaged in the patriot cause. Elder Charles Markland, pastor of the church of Southwest of Neuse, seems to have abandoned his pastorate in his zeal to serve the State at this time of need. According to Hufham, he was on intimate relations with Governor Caswell.[55] In 1779 he was one of the Commissioners who ran the dividing line between Dobbs and Wayne counties.[56] Two other members of this church who were either at this time ministers or became ministers shortly afterwards were also patriots. One of these, Kittrell Mondine, was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1776. Later he was active in requiring those whose loyalty was suspected to take the test oath.[57] Another, John Dillahunty, was a soldier until 1781, when he became pastor of the church at Trent.[58] In general, the pastors of the Separate churches in Chatham, and the counties further west were also devoted to the cause of independence. There is a tradition that Rev. Francis Dorsett, afterwards pastor of the church at Rocky River, who had been one of the boldest of the Regulators, was also an officer in the continental forces. Rev. David Allen, said by Morgan Edwards to have been a minister of the church at Shallow Ford, was in 1775 on the Surry County Committee of Safety.[59] Another Baptist preacher whose patriotism is sufficiently well attested was Elder Edmund Lilly, a minister of the churches in Anson County. By Legislative Act of 1778 he was made one of the Commissioners to divide the county of Anson into two counties, and to buy land and erect a courthouse, prison and stocks for the county of Montgomery.[60] I have spoken above of the services of Elder William Hill a minister of Surry County.

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[53] It is probable that many other Baptists were among the representatives to these Conventions and otherwise prominent in the events of the days of Seventy-six, but documentary evidence with reference to them has been lost. It is only because the Wake Forest College Library is in possession of the Record Book of Poplar Springs church that I was able to identify John Norwood as a Baptist.

[54] MS. History of North Carolina Baptists, Chapter VI, p. 11.

[55] *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, 155.

[56] *State Records*, XXIV, 290. [57] *State Records*, XXIII, 993; XIII, 446.

[58] Sprague, *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, 851f.

The instances already given of loyalty and service in the cause of liberty well attest the fact that the Baptists as a whole, both laymen and preachers, were active patriots. In the record above are the names of seventeen Baptist preachers whose patriotism is established by the fact that they were called by their fellow citizens to places of public trust either in the time of the Revolution or the years immediately succeeding it. This indicates that the Baptist preachers were almost a unit for independence. Only a few instances of Baptist laymen are known who were not Whigs.[61] Of Baptist preachers only three whose loyalty was suspected came under the notice of the vigilant Safety Committees of the various counties. One of these was Rev. William Cook, pastor of the church at Dutchman's Creek in the present county of Davie. The other two were James Childs and James Perry of Anson County. The first was quickly silenced and professed repentance. The other two were fanatics rather than Tories and got into trouble by preaching non-resistance. I am giving here the complete story of the activities of all three and the trouble into which they came by failing to measure up to the true standard of patriotism.

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[59] *Colonial Records,* X, 251. In July, 1781, he had established iron works and his workmen were exempted from military duty by Act of the Legislature. *State Records,* XVII, 852.

[60] *State Records,* XXIV, 233.

[61] I have already in note to Chapter XV mentioned the case Conner Dowd.

William Cook had about 1771 come from the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church in Bute (Warren) County, and in 1772 had been made pastor of a newly constituted Particular Baptist church on Dutchman's Creek in the present county of Davie.[62]

Mr. Cook had the confidence of the church and it grew greatly, establishing branches at the Forks of the Yadkin and at Mulberry Field, until early in 1775. At this time a Tory paper known as "the Protest," condemning the activities of the patriots, was circulated in the Dutchman's Creek neighborhood. Cook signed it, and at once got into trouble with the Committee of Safety of Rowan County, of which Davie was then a part. On July 18, 1775, this Committee had Cook before them. In the most humble terms and with a great show of contrition he professed to signing "the Protest," and to other conduct in opposition to the cause of liberty, and asked for instruction.[63]

This vigorous action of the Rowan Committee of Safety seems to have completely quieted Mr. Cook; we hear no more of his engaging in any Tory propaganda, but possibly he was not changed in his views. His church still regarded him with suspicion, and called him to answer for his Tory views at its conference on September 5, 1775. On his making public apology, probably as abject as that made before the Committee of Safety, he was allowed to continue preaching. Even this failed to satisfy the church. At the conference on November 3, 1775, as if to counteract the Tory propaganda of a few months before, the church voted that if any of the brethren saw fit to join the "American Cause" they should have liberty to do so, but whether they joined or not they should be still regarded with love. With patriotism increasing as the struggle for freedom became more pronounced, twenty brethren of the church in conference on March 15, 1777, added to their confession of faith an article declaring that "We believe that State Laws and Constitution are not to be canceled in the church of Christ, wherein they do not concern the worship of God." Cook's name is not found in the list of signers. His people were still dissatisfied with him and again called him to answer charges, but as he was doubtless professedly loyal to the State the charges could not be proved and he was allowed to continue to preach, but it seems, in the capacity of assistant pastor only. At a meeting on January 30, 1778, the church excommunicated five of its members who three years before had joined with Cook in singing "the Protest," preferring this as well as other charges against them. After this nothing more is said of Mr. Cook's Toryism. The friends of liberty in the church had triumphed, if it can be called triumph to have in fellowship one whose essential loyalty is under suspicion.

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[62] The minutes of the Kehukee Association show that Cook was still at the Fishing Creek church in November, 1771. He was one of the constituent members of the Dutchman Creek's church on its organization March 5, 1772. See copy of MS. minutes of church in Wake Forest College Library.

[63] See the Journal of the Committee printed in full in Wheeler's *History of North Carolina*, p. 366.

A second Baptist preacher who got in trouble with the new State Government was Rev. James Childs. He was a Separate Baptist and is described in the *State Records* as being of the Newlight Baptist Persuasion. He had been in Virginia until 1770, when going with Rev. Samuel Harris on a tour of the churches of the Carolinas he had settled in Anson County and had built up a large church either in that county or over the line in South Carolina.[64] He was a man of many eccentricities and it is probable that he hoped by coming to Anson to have a freer field for their exercise than his Virginia brethren would tolerate. As the State began to call the citizens to arms to secure their freedom he threatened the members of his church with excommunication if they heeded the call. Being summoned before the Committee of Safety at Halifax on August 13, 1776, he declared that "he was a preacher of the New Light Baptist Persuasion, that one of the tenets of his church was not to bear arms, and that he preached this doctrine not only in his particular church, but in all the churches of his communion, and that he had inculcated it by the terrors of excommunication." Every Baptist will recognize in this statement, several things utterly abhorrent to Baptist principles. Being asked to take the oath of allegiance he refused. The committee properly decided that such preaching was dangerous at that critical time, and decreed that Childs should be regarded as a public enemy and sent on his parole to the town of Edenton from whose corporate limits he was forbidden to depart.[65] In the following November he made a petition to the Halifax Congress for enlargement, and being allowed to come before that body was told that his request would be granted if he would no longer preach non-resistance and would take the oath of allegiance. He returned to consider but there is no

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[64] Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* p. 49, names him as a delegate to the Association of 1771 from the church in Louisa County, but he "disappeared"

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after the first meeting. Harris reported on the tour of the Carolinas to which he and Childs had been appointed by the Association. Semple gives his name as "Childs" in his historical part, but as "Chiles" in his biography, p. 411f., in which he says of him: "Before he embraced religion, having a sturdy set of limbs and a resolute spirit, he often employed them in bruising his countrymen's faces. He was likewise a gambler. . . . However converted in things of greater consequence he was never converted from his oddness. He was a member of the first Separate Baptist church north of James River. He was remarkably fond of vision: by which he pretended to be taught of God how every matter was to eventuate. . . . In various places God set seals to his ministry. After a few years, he moved to South Carolina, where he planted a large church. He retained his notions about visions to his last day. Report says, that after meeting with misfortunes, and being reduced in his property and health, he went to the house of a woman and told her his God had said he must die there that day." Though she sent him away twice he finally returned and stretched himself upon the bed and yielded up the ghost.

[65] *Colonial Records*, X, 699-700.

further record at this time.[66] A year later he was in Anson jail, from which with several other unnamed prisoners he sent a petition to the Legislature, which appearing to the House of a seditious nature was delivered to the waiter to be burnt.[67] After this we hear no more of him except for the sketch of Semple. Possibly he was allowed to escape to South Carolina where he built up the large church of which Semple speaks.

It was seemingly under the influence of Childs that James Perry, another Separate Baptist preacher of the same county, was affected with a like doctrine and obstinacy in holding to it. Being brought before the Anson Committee of Secrecy, of which Samuel Spencer was chairman, he refused to give bail and was held to appear before the Halifax Congress in November, 1776. There is no record further of him, but it is probable that he was remanded to the Anson County jail and was one of those who sent the seditious letter to the Legislature in 1777.[68]

Certainly Childs was not speaking for Baptists generally when he said that it was a tenet of his church not to bear arms. If the church he served had any such tenet it was due to the eccentricity of Childs, whom Semple describes as a visionary. Probably Perry was his disciple. They are not charged with being Tories, but dangerous propagandists, as in fact they were, and on that charge were most properly denied their liberty.[69] I have given full accounts of these activities of Cook, Childs, and Perry, because they are the only Baptist preachers on record in this State against whose loyalty to the patriot cause any word has been said. The names of the last two are unknown in Baptist annals of the State.

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[66] *Colonial Records*, X, 953-54.

[67] *Colonial Records*, XII, 217.

[68] *State Records*, XXII, 752.

[69] Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, I, 546, has little warrant for saying that "Childs, a preacher of the New Light Baptist persuasion, veiled his disloyalty in the garb of religion."

## XX

## THE KEHUKEE ASSOCIATION 1777-1805

We saw that at the division of the old Kehukee Association at the Falls of the Tar in 1775 a majority of the churches and delegates present followed Burkitt, Barrow and Meglamre in maintaining that the churches should be purged of all members baptized in unbelief. But it was only by accident that the reformers had a majority at this time. Though unrepresented in the Association of this year the greater number of churches continued in the old Association, which so long as it existed kept the name of Kehukee. All the Virginia churches had favored the reform, but of the North Carolina churches in the Association only that of Lemuel Burkitt, Sandy Run (Bertie), was with them, unless we add the church at Tar River, under the care of Elder Henry Ledbetter, which in 1775 made application for admission to the Association, and which two years later was one of the constituent members of the new Association of the reformers.

Burkitt says that an agreement was made at the time of the division that the reforming churches should meet in Association the next time at Sappony church in Sussex County, Virginia, under the care of Elder James Bell. Probably this is inaccurate, as Sappony was a Separate Baptist church and certainly had no delegates at the meeting at the Falls of the Tar. But at any rate, it was at the Sappony church that the first session of the new Association was held, beginning Saturday before the second Sunday in August, 1777. Burkitt seems to imply that this Association from the beginning claimed the old name of Kehukee,[1] and nowhere indicates that it was called by any other name. Hassell, however, says that the new Association was at first called the United Baptist Association.[2] This seems to have been its official title for some years, although Burkitt and Read never call it by this name, and refer to the old Kehukee by the name "Regular Baptist Association." In 1788, when the bars that had divided the Separates from the Regulars had been removed the name of the Association was declared to be "The United Baptists." In the next year the six or seven churches of the old Kehukee which had held aloof were admitted to membership to the new Association and the name became "The United Baptist Association, formerly called the Kehukee Association."[3] This remained the official name until the churches south of the Tar River were dismissed to form the Neuse Association, after which the name "Kehukee Association" has been consistently used.[4] This had been the popular name since the Revolutionary War.[5]

The churches which sent delegates to Sappony at the formation of the new Association were ten in number. I give their names here followed by the names of the pastors: Sandy Run (Bertie), Lemuel Burkitt; Tar River, (Granville County), Henry Ledbetter; Yoppim, Chowan County, no pastor; Swift Creek (Edgecombe County), John Tanner; Rocky Swamp, (Halifax County), Jesse Read; Bute County, Joshua Kelly; Mill Swamp, Isle of Wight County, David

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[1] *Kehukee Association,* p. 41. "We therefore argued that *we* were the true Association who had not departed from their original principles."

[2] *Church History,* 698.

[3] *Kehukee Association,* 94, 98.

[4] *Rippon's Register,* II, 195. Burkitt and Read all along were prone to use the name "Kehukee" for the new Association. See *Kehukee Association,* 96f, 106.

[5] "Something remarkable is to be noticed in the fact that this Association has been termed since its origin, both by friends and foes, the 'Kehukee Association.' . . . The name 'Kehukee' obtained over all others, and from first to last 'Kehukee' it has been called." Hassell, *Church History,* 711.

Barrow; Raccoon Swamp, Sussex County, John Meglamre; Reedy Creek, Brunswick County, Virginia, Zachary Thompson; Sappony, Sussex County, James Bell. Of these the first three mentioned in North Carolina counties and the first three in Virginia counties were of the Regular order, the remaining four Separates.

Here was something new, the union of Separate and Regular Baptist churches in an Association. Such efforts as had been hitherto made both in Virginia and the Carolinas had failed, as we saw above in the account of the Sandy Creek and the Kehukee Association. In some churches indeed the bar to communion had been taken down in true fraternal spirit. At a meeting of the church at Dutchman's Creek, Davie County, June 5, 1773, it was agreed that a door be opened that their Separate Baptist brethren might commune with them "if they walked orderly and held no heretical principles."[6]

The formation of the new Association was doubtless not effected without some compromises and concessions on both sides. Burkitt, Barrow, Meglamre and Thompson had already led their churches to conform to the Separate practice of retaining in fellowship only those who were converted before their baptism, but in a Confession of Faith which contained the principles to which the churches of the new Association were expected to conform, Burkitt and the Regulars had the better of it. For the Confession, while making slight concessions to the Separates in the articles on the Holy Spirit, insists upon Burkitt's cherished doctrine of Free Grace, or Calvinism in baldest form. The most significant articles are these:

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[6] MS. Minutes of Dutchman's Creek Church. Devin. *History of the Grassy Creek Church,* 83f., says that in March, 1777, such fraternal relations were established between the Grassy Creek church (Separate) and Bennett's church (Regular) and wrongly supposes that in this matter the Grassy Creek church was the pioneer.

3. We believe, that God before the foundation of the world, for a purpose of his own glory, did elect a certain number of men and angels to eternal life; and that this election is particular, eternal and unconditional on the creature's part.

6. We also believe, that it is utterly out of the power of men, as fallen creatures, to keep the law of God perfectly, repent of their sins truly, or believe in Christ, except they be drawn by the Holy Spirit.

7. We believe, that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which he has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned and sanctified; and that it is impossible that they can utterly refuse the call; but shall be made willing, by divine grace, to receive the offers of mercy.

9. We believe in like manner, that God's elect shall not only be called and justified, but that they shall be converted, born again, and changed by the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit.

10. We believe, that such as are converted, justified and called by His grace, shall persevere in holiness and never fall finally away.

This Covenant with its rigid Calvinism was, as we shall see, not without its effect in checking the progress of this Association. But several causes rendered its Calvinism less powerful than the language would lead us to expect. In the first place, Burkitt and several of the other ablest preachers of the Association had had early associations with the General Baptists and also with such evangelical Separates as Elders Jeremiah Walker and Jeremiah Dargan. Again, the members of the former General Baptist churches still retained their own principles and were little influenced by creeds and dogmas. The same was true of the members of the Separate Baptist churches. Accordingly, though we hear much in Burkitt and Read's history of the doctrine of Free Grace, the fact remains that the Calvinism of the Baptists of this section was not so pronounced as that of the churches to the south of the Roanoke. They were much more evangelical and progressive. It was no accident that a line of cleavage soon became evident and resulted in open rupture after half a century, when the Kehukee Association declared against missions and other coöperative enterprises of the churches.[7]

It must be said that Burkitt was much less harsh than his creed, which he seems to have enjoyed rather as an intellectual exercise than as a basis for his preaching. If we are to believe his own statement, he made a universal call of sinners to repentance, using many of the methods of the modern evangelist.[8] But the statement of principles being published gained much acceptance in the churches of the Association and as used by the more ignorant and unspiritual it checked the growth of the Baptists and left the field free for the rise of Methodism. It was right the other way about in the limits of the Sandy Creek Association. At this time they had no preachers of any great ability, but they had no creed except the Bible, and even the unlettered preacher learned enough gospel truth in the Bible to be able to minister to the religious wants of the people and thus keep them generally true to their Baptist faith.

At the meeting of the Association in 1777 not much was done except organize. The Association agreed to hold two meetings annually, one in the spring, the other in the fall. Elder John Meglamre was elected Moderator, and Elder Lemuel Burkitt, Clerk, which positions they continued to hold, Meglamre until the formation of the Portsmouth Association, with which he went, in 1790, and Burkitt until the formation of the Chowan Association in 1805. At this meeting the Clerk was ordered to get a minute book in which to record the proceedings of the Association.

The meeting for the spring was begun on Saturday, May 16, 1778. The place was Potecasi, in Northampton County. This church had been gathered by Burkitt at the time of the revival in 1773-74, soon after he assumed the pastorate of the church at Sandy Run. To it had also come some of the members of the old Meherrin church, who had become dissatisfied with the easy method of admission of members at their own church.[9] It was at this time and for many years continued to be a branch of Sandy Run.[10] At this meeting the reformers were encouraged by finding other churches applying for membership. One in Brunswick County, Virginia, under the care of Elder Moses Foster was received, while the church at Cashie under charge of Rev. Jeremiah Dargan was received conditionally pending the result of investigation. Not content with these accessions the Association resolved to seek those churches which had refused to follow them three years before. Accordingly, a committee was appointed to visit "the Regular Baptist Association" and in a "most friendly manner endeavor to effect a reconciliation." This committee consisted of Elders James Bell, John Meglamre and Zachary Thompson, who seem to have had much less part than Burkitt and Barrow in that fierce debate of three years before which ended with the division of the Association. The committee, however, never performed its office. Rev. James Bell died the following September and Burkitt was appointed in his place; soon after all religious activities were interrupted by the disturbances caused by the near approach of the British army, and were not resumed for several years.

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[7] As the term Free Grace is no longer much used I may say that it does not imply that God's grace is free for any one who will take it, but that it is free in the sense that it is wholly unmerited by the one on whom God bestows it, and being unpurchasable, is bestowed by God of his own free will upon those whom He has elected for salvation, and upon them alone.

[8] See his account of the Great Revival of 1801-03. *Kehukee Association,* pp. 140ff.

The next semiannual session met on September 28, 1778, at Elder Meglamre's meeting house at Raccoon Swamp, Sussex County, Virginia. It seems that little business was done except to discuss plans to effect a reconciliation with the Kehukee Association. The churches yearning for a revival set apart two days for fasting and prayer. It may be stated here that Major John W. Moore, a native of this region, said that "perhaps in no other such struggle has there ever been so widespread a spirit of prayer and supplication."[11]

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[9] Wheeler, *History of Meherrin Church.*

[10] It had not yet been constituted as a distinct church in 1803. *Kehukee Association*, p. 197.

The next May, 1779, the Association met at Fishing Creek, at the "new meeting house," that is, the church now called Lawrence's, a few miles south of Scotland Neck, where Elder John Tanner had gathered a congregation.[12] On account of the invasion of the British, who were said to be at Suffolk, the whole country was in distress. Only a few delegates were present and little business was done. But the church at Cashie was unconditionally received at this time. "All those difficulties before mentioned, which were for some time a bar to their being admitted, were all removed."[13]

It was at this meeting that the church of Pasquotank, or rather the church of Camden since the erection of that county in 1777, became a member of the new Association. According to the table of Morgan Edwards, this had been one of the constituent churches of the Kehukee Association in 1769, but it is not listed in the minutes until 1771. Its pastor at that time and in 1779 was Elder Henry Abbot. In the meantime Mr. Abbot had performed a noble service as a member of the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in April and November, 1776, of which an account may be found in another section. With the admission of this church the new Association had as members all the Baptist churches north of the Roanoke and the Sound. In connection therewith we find the following joyful words of Burkitt:

> This church was one of those which was formerly in union with us before the reformation took place, and was a very ancient respectable church. It appears that this church had for some time believed the principles on which the reformation was grounded at

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[11] MS. History of N. C. Baptists, Chap. VI.

[12] *Kehukee Association,* 1, 240.

[13] *Kehukee Association,* p. 62. The authors do not indicate the nature of the difficulties; but they probably consisted in the reluctance of the Cashie church to accept the harsh statement of principles to which the churches of the Kehukee Association were expected to subscribe.

> first: But they did not so readily accede to the measures which were fallen upon at the Falls of Tar River, because their pastor, Henry Abbot, was baptized in unbelief, and had not seen his duty to comply with baptism since he was converted; but before this Association, which was holden at Fishing Creek, he complied with his duty, and a reformation in that church, in this respect, took place and they again united with us. Blessed be God for the union of his saints.[14]

Burkitt and Read say very little of the development of the Separate Baptists in this section. But the fact is that in this territory they had become more numerous than the Regular Baptists. Possibly this was partly due to the strife engendered between the General and Regular Baptists by the reformation of Miller and Vanhorn, but it is largely to be explained by the proselyting zeal and aggressiveness of the Separates.

Upon its acceptance of the principles of the Separates about the year 1757 the church at Grassy Creek in Granville County had become very active. It gathered into its membership many living at a distance of fifty miles, and in a few years had established branches in all directions to a distance of forty miles.[15] The records show that the Separate preachers of southeastern Virginia also were very early in North Carolina preaching and baptizing, and by their labors the Separates soon became very numerous in all this region as far east as Northampton and as far south as Edgecombe. The first missionaries of the Church of England to labor in this section found many Baptists there. In April, 1768, Rev. Charles Cupples, of Bute (Warren) County, spoke of Ranting Anabaptists, by which he probably meant Separates.[16] Three years later some parts of his parish were recognized as Baptist communities.[17] In October 1769,

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[14] It appears, as Mr. Moore remarks, that the ordinance of baptism was administered to Abbot three times: once when he was christened as a child; again when he became a Baptist in 1758, and was baptized by Elder Joseph Parker; and the third time about the year 1779.

[15] Devin, *Grassy Creek Church*, p. 52.

[16] *Colonial Records*, VII, 705.

[17] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 553.

Rev. James McCartney, recently inducted by Tryon as minister in Granville County, found the Baptists there very numerous and believed them great bigots.[18] It is probable that these also were Separates. It was certainly Separates that Rev. John Barnett found in Northampton when after becoming distasteful to his parishioners in Brunswick he was transferred to St. George's Parish by Governor Tryon, and inducted as their minister. Writing in November, 1770, he said that the New Light (Separate) Baptist preachers were attending his services, sometimes two, sometimes three, and sometimes four, and he supposed that the New Light Baptists were much decreased as result of his labors.[19] But when according to his successor, Rev. C. E. Taylor, he had fled to Virginia, "being charged with crimes too base to mention," the New Lights (Separate) Baptists were still numerous enough to lessen the happiness of Mr. Taylor, who declared that they were very troublesome; yet with the blessing of God he hoped to eradicate them.[20] After a year had elapsed, however, he found these New Lights (Separates) still troublesome.[21] And after two years Mr. Taylor found the Anabaptists still active and sectarists of other names increasing so rapidly as to perplex him.[22]

Of the Separate Baptist churches which were constituent members of the new Association it is probable that the church in Bute (Warren) County, of which Elder Joshua Kelly was pastor, was the same as that mentioned by Devin as being a branch of the Grassy Creek church in 1772, and later known as Tanner's Creek.[23] But the records tell us nothing further of this church and its pastor than their names. We know little more of the Separate Baptist church in Edgecombe (Swift Creek) of which Rev. John Tanner was minister. It had previously been a branch of the church of the Falls of the Tar. It is probable that Tanner had several preaching places in Halifax and Edgecombe. He was a preacher of some note. Before this time he had been in South Carolina. Later, before 1786, we find him in Kentucky.[24] During his labors in North Carolina he gathered the church now known as Lawrence's (Primitive Baptist), in early years called by the name of New Meeting House and Fishing Creek, and later considered a branch of the church at Kehukee.[25]

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[18] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 85-6.

[19] *Colonial Records*, VIII, 228-9.

[20] *Colonial Records*, IX, 23. Letter of August 20, 1771.

[21] *Colonial Records*, IX, 326, Letter of August 24, 1772: "I don't know what they call themselves, some term them Anabaptists, some New Light Baptists, and others Baptists. I have talked with some of their preachers, who are surprisingly ignorant, and pretend to illumination and assurances; they are so obstinately and wilfully ignorant themselves and teach their fellows to be so too, that they will hearken to no reason whatever. . . . They increase surprisingly in Virginia, and in some parts of Carolina, but, I bless God, rather decrease in my parish, multitudes of them having left their Teachers are constant attendants at my churches. We have a few Quakers in this parish but they are no ways troublesome."

[22] *Ibid.*, 1003.

For the church on Rocky Swamp we have more information. It was about ten miles north of Enfield near the stream now called Rocky Creek. Morgan Edwards names it as a branch of the Lower Fishing Creek church, from which it was distant twelve miles. But after the troubles that came with the transformation from the General to the Particular Baptist order both the parent church and the branches were almost brought to extinction. In the case of this Rocky Swamp church and doubtless in others the Separate Baptists gathered the scattered members and organized a church of their order. In the year 1773 Elder Jeremiah Walker was in this neighborhood and baptized Jesse Read and probably others. The next year Elder John Tanner came and preached and baptized. On July 11,

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[23] Devin, *Grassy Creek church*, 77, says, "In what part of Warren County, N. C., this arm of Grassy Creek church was located, I do not know but it is more than probable that it was at or near the place where the church now called Tanner's is situated, and out of which it was formed." Mrs. L. W. Montgomery in her *Sketches of Old Warrenton*, 196, says that the church was located three miles northwest of Warrenton, and was established probably about 1755.

[24] Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, 228.

[25] *Kehukee Association*, 240. Hufham supposed that this church was first gathered by Sojourner, but I have been unable to verify his conjecture.

1774, the church was constituted by Elders Walker, Tanner and Joseph Anthony, and the next year Elder Jesse Read was ordained as its pastor. On the year of its organization it became a member of the Separate Association of Virginia, which met on the second Saturday in October, 1774, with the church of Jeremiah Walker in Amelia County. From the first it was a very active church, baptizing 260 into its fellowship from the time of its organization until 1803. In the meantime it had established a branch at Davis's meeting House (Concinnary), and another on the Quankey near Halifax, which became an independent church in 1799.[26]

The Separate Baptists planted their churches also in the southern and eastern portions of Bertie. The minister through whom this was effected was Elder Jeremiah Dargan of the Congaree church of South Carolina. Burkitt and Read say there was something of romance in his coming to North Carolina. About the year 1769 a young lady named Anne Moore, whose home was at Cashie, was converted, and finding no Baptist minister near went to South Carolina, a long and perilous journey, to secure baptism.[27] Here she met Mr. Dargan, and became his wife. According to Morgan Edwards, Dargan in this year had preached in the vicinity of the High Hills of the Santee, a "wild place," but his preaching was without visible effect on the irreligious settlers who, however, were thereafter thrown into panic and terror by the alarming preaching of the more powerful Joseph Reese. But Dargan, though too gentle for the wild denizens of the Santee hills, was a man of great piety and zealous for the propagation of the gospel, very tender-hearted and hardly ever known to preach without shedding abundant tears. Soon after his marriage "divine providence so ordered that he should come with his wife to her home in Bertie." He found the people of Cashie ready to give him a hearing. At first he preached in private houses, usually at that of a Mr. Sowell, "and was greatly persecuted by a few, who used all their influence to prevent him from preaching, particularly Capt. John Campbell. But vain were his attempts; for the Baptists now were in a measure like the Israelites in Egypt, the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied." (Burkitt.) In 1771 he constituted the church at Cashie, for which the members built a house of worship about a mile east of Windsor. With the aid of other Separate Baptist preachers, among them Elder Jeremiah Walker of Virginia, one of the ablest and most eloquent of the Separate ministers, he soon evangelized all the region round about, and established a branch of the Cashie church at Wiccacon on the Chowan River. In 1772, as we have seen, at the call of Burkitt he went to Chowan and did a great evangelical work among the irreligious in the Ballard's Bridge section. Many of the converts made at this time became members of the church at Wiccacon, among them Elder Welsh, who for many years served as the minister of that congregation. Others joined a few years later, in 1781, in the establishment of the church at Ballard's Bridge.

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[26] *Kehukee Association,* p. 242ff.

[27] *Kehukee Association,* 82ff. As this was the year of the formation of the Kehukee Association there were many Baptist preachers in fifty miles of Cashie. Miss Moore probably had other reasons for taking her trip.

Such were the abundant labors of this simple, pious preacher. Under his ministry, says Burkitt, "many souls were awakened, got converted and joined the church." Among them were many of the most prominent citizens of Bertie, such as Captain John Freeman and Captain Joshua Freeman. But his preaching disturbed some who had been at ease in Zion and had heard nothing more startling than the discourses of an Episcopal minister. Among some of this class Dargan with his preaching and Baptist doctrines aroused violent opposition. Feeling ran high against him and the Baptists, and became the more intense as many of the best men and of the chief women not a few were converted and baptized. In these early years a Mrs. Dawson was converted and received for baptism by the Cashie church.

Her husband was among the persecutors and threatened that he would shoot any one who should baptize his wife; under this threat the baptism was deferred for some time, though it seems that the reason assigned was the infirm health of Mr. Dargan. But afterwards, when Rev. John Tanner, pastor of a Separate Baptist church in Edgecombe, had come, he, at Mr. Dargan's request, baptized Mrs. Dawson. Whether Tanner had been apprised of Dawson's threat is not known, but he became the victim of Dawson's rage. In the following June, 1777, Tanner was on his way to preach at Burkitt's church at Sandy Run. Dawson having learned of the appointment, came from Windsor and waylaid Tanner on the east side of Norfleet's Ferry, about where now is the bridge on the road from Scotland Neck to Rich Square. As Tanner came near Dawson shot him with a large horse pistol charged with buck shot, inflicting a dangerous wound in the thigh which well nigh proved fatal. Dawson repenting of his deed and becoming alarmed sent a doctor to care for the wounded man. After this we hear no more of persecutions.[28]

The above accounts show the successful labors of the Separate Baptists right in the section where the Particular Baptists had the advantage of being first on the field and had their strongest ministers and churches. This can be accounted for only by the fact that whereas the Regular Baptists were occupied with questions of theology the Separates were preaching the simple gospel of redeeming love. As a corrective of the loose Arminianism of the General Baptists, Miller and Vanhorn had taught the strict Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession to the churches of this region. Thereafter the preachers of the Kehukee Association made too much of it; they could preach no sermon without insisting on the doctrine of Free Grace; even the spiritually minded Burkitt thought it necessary to require that every church joining his new Association should subscribe to an uncompromising statement of it. It was perhaps on this account that the church at Cashie did not immediately become a member of the new Association, for the Calvinism of the Confession of Faith of the new Association was hard to be reconciled with the evangelical preaching with which Dargan had won the people of Bertie.

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[28] *Kehukee Association,* 82ff., 191ff., 200ff.

Respecting the Regular Baptist churches of Virginia which had been members of the Kehukee Association and which at this time or later became members of the new Association of Burkitt, both Burkitt and Read and Semple say that they owed their origin to North Carolina churches and ministers who had labored in North Carolina. For about the year 1742 the General Baptist churches of southeastern Virginia became extinct, though it is evident that many of that faith still remained in Virginia and were occasionally visited by preachers of their order.[29] The Pungo church, the first Particular Baptist church to be constituted in this section, was a branch of the Pasquotank (Shiloh) church, while Elders Meglamre and Zachary Thompson had been connected, the former with the church at Kehukee and the latter with the church at Reedy Creek (Fishing Creek), before they organized their churches in Virginia. Elder David Barrow was baptized at Reedy Creek in North Carolina and became a member of Thompson's church at Reedy Creek in Virginia.[30]

Owing, as Burkitt and Read say, to the distress of our country and the molestation of our enemies, no regular session of their branch of the Kehukee Association was held for the years 1780 and 1781. With independence already won, the Association assembled on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in May, 1782. I am giving below a list of the times and places of the meetings from this time until the dismissal of the Virginia churches to form the Portsmouth Association in 1790.

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[29] Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, p. 344ff., *Kehukee Association*, p. 251.
[30] *Kehukee Association*, p. 270.

May 25, 1782. Mr. Arthur Cotten's, Hertford County, N. C.
May 24, 1783. Davis's Meeting House (Concinnary), Halifax County, N. C.
May 15, 1784. Sandy Run, Bertie County, N. C.
October 14, 1784. Lower Fishing Creek, Halifax County, N. C.
May 14, 1785. Shoulder's Hill, Nansemond County, Va.
October 13, 1785. Kehukee, Halifax County, N. C.
May 20, 1786. Joshua Freeman's, near Wiccacon, Bertie County, N. C.
September 30, 1786. South Quay, Southampton County, Va.
May 19, 1787. Fountain Creek, Brunswick County, Va.
October 12, 1787. Lower Fishing Creek, Halifax County, N. C.
May 18, 1788. Raccoon Swamp, Sussex County, Va.
October 11, 1788. Falls of Tar, Nash County, N. C.
May 17, 1789. Mill Swamp, Isle of Wight County, Va.
October 10, 1789. Whitfield's Meeting House, Pitt County, N. C.
May 16, 1790. Reedy Creek, Brunswick County, Va.
October 9, 1790. Davis's Meeting House (Concinnary), Halifax County, N. C.

The place of meeting in 1782 was not at any church but at the residence of Mr. Arthur Cotten. The circumstances which brought the meeting to this place are thus told by Mr. J. W. Moore, in his manuscript history of North Carolina Baptists:

> Although there were Baptist meeting houses at Potecasi, Meherrin and Sandy Run, all of which were close by the place of meeting, yet for some reason now unknown the old Episcopal chapel of St. John in Hertford County was selected by Elder Burkitt and others for that purpose. They held that as the house was erected by money collected from the people of the county by taxation and no Episcopal services were then being held therein, that therefore the Baptists who constituted the majority of the people had the right to use the chapel for the session of the Kehukee Association. The invitations consequently went out but when the delegations were about to arrive on the ground, Col. Robert Sumner, who was the Senior Warden of St. John's chapel, interfered his strenuous objection to its being used for any purpose but the regular

Episcopal forms. Captain Arthur Cotten was the Junior Warden and as strongly insisted that the chapel should be thrown open to the Baptist people. The dispute was so warm that Elder Burkitt grew doubtful as to whether his brethren should meet at a point so hotly contested by the controlling powers. But Captain Arthur Cotten remedied all difficulty by substituting his own private residence for St. John's chapel. This offer was accepted and the Association consequently was held at the house of a man who was never a member of a Baptist church. Twelve large mulberry trees formed an archway in front of the house like the vaulted roof of some cathedral, and there beneath the wide-spreading limbs the saints of old met to thank God for their many blessings and to prepare for the future work of the vineyard.[31]

At this session began the accessions of the churches which had remained in the old Kehukee Association after the division. The first to return was the church at the Falls of the Tar where the division occurred. At this time it was under the care of Elder Emmanuel Skinner, who had been raised up in the church and was an ordained minister, and though never called by the church to the pastoral office continued his ministerial services there until 1797, when he moved to Tennessee and was succeeded by Elder Nathan Gilbert. Elder John Moore, the first pastor who had opposed the reforms of Burkitt, had left the church in 1780 and became an itinerant minister, and before 1790 had joined the church at Reedy Creek, where his son, Elder Lewis Moore, had become pastor in 1786, and was to continue in that office until his removal to Kentucky in 1798. Before coming to Reedy Creek, Elder Lewis Moore had been in Johnston County where his brother John had very early gathered some Baptist churches. Probably their father was with them during the years 1780-86.

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[31] Mr. Moore has the following note about this place: "This residence of Captain Arthur Cotten was also the birthplace and home of the late Dr. G. C. Moore (father of J. W. Moore), who was his great-grandson. It is also the birthplace of the author of this work, who was reared there. By a strange co-incidence another of my ancestors, Deacon Joshua Freeman of Bertie, also entertained the Kehukee Association of 1786 at his house, near the residence of W. H. Taylor, Esq. of Bertie."

After the abandonment of their parishes by the ministers of the Establishment at the opening of the Revolution, their chapels were occupied by other denominations. Burkitt, writing in *Rippon's Register,* II, 205, in the year 1794, says: "The lower counties in this state are mostly Baptists or followers of them. The chapels which were built for the Episcopalians are chiefly occupied by the Baptist ministers."

At the same session of the Association there were several other accessions. These were the churches of Cowenjock, Currituck County, under the care of James Gamewell; the church at Town Creek, Edgecombe County, under the care of Elder Joshua Barnes, and the church at Flat Swamp, Pitt County, under the care of Elder John Page, which had become a member of the old Kehukee after the division in 1775.

A statement of Burkitt and Read[32] indicates that the old Kehukee Association continued to meet until 1781 and later, possibly as late as 1789, when, as we shall see, a final group of six of the churches of that Association joined the Association of Burkitt. But some of the old Kehukee churches from this time were among those admitted almost every year.

In 1783 a church at Black Creek in Wayne County was received. It was a few years later and probably now under the charge of Elder Ephraim Daniel. (Asplund.) At the session of 1784 the churches admitted were the church at Red Bank in Pitt County under the care of Elder Abraham Page; Neuse River, Craven County, under the care of Elder James Brinson; and Swift Creek, Craven County, under the care of Rev. James Ellis. In 1785 the additions were Scuppernong, Tyrrell County, under the care of Elder Amariah Biggs; Bear Creek, Dobbs (Lenoir) County; and Morattuck, Washington County, which had been gathered through the instrumentality of Elders Silas Mercer and John Page, but which was now ministered by Elder Martin Ross. In 1786 the church at Knobscrook, near Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, was admitted; it seems to have had no regular minister, but to have been ministered to occasionally by Elder Thomas Etheridge. At the session of 1787, the church of Martin Ross, Skewarkey, near Williamston in Martin County became a member of the Association. In 1788 the church of Newport River, Carteret County, and the church on New River, Onslow County, the latter and probably the former under the care of Elder Robert Nixon, were admitted. The next year, 1789, saw the accession of the churches of Lockwood's Folly, under the care of Elder William Goodman; of Saddle Tree Creek, Robeson County, under the care of Elder Jacob Tarver; and the church in Bladen and New Hanover, probably including Bull Tail, now Wells' Chapel, and Beaver Dam, now under the care of Elder William Cooper. In the same year, the remaining churches of the old Kehukee, and some others which were of more recent formation, seven in all besides many branches, came into the Association. These were the churches in Warren, Upper Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek), under the care of Elder Lewis Moore; Sandy Creek in Franklin, under the care of Elder William Lancaster; Toisnot, under the care of Elder Reuben Hayes; the church in Johnston and Wake (Three Creeks, Swift Creek), under the care of Elder John Moore, Junior; the church in Duplin, Wayne and Johnston (Naughunty, Bear Marsh), under the care of Elder Charles Hines; the church in Sampson, Wake and Cumberland (Neal's Creek), under the care of Elder William Taylor; the church in Sampson (Great Cohara, now Rowan), under the care of Elder Fleet Cooper.

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[32] *Kehukee Association*, 228. In discussing the church at the Falls of the Tar, they say: "After the revolution in the Association, this church continued in the regular Baptist Association (viz. that part of the Kehukee Association that refused to accede to our measures) until March, 1781, when this church became dissatisfied with the proceedings of that Association, withdrew from them, and was in communion with no other church until November of the same year, when she joined communion with the church on Fishing Creek, at Daniels meeting-house, under the care of Elder Silas Mercer. Soon after this she joined our Association again."

Further accessions in 1790 were the church at Flatty Creek (now Salem), Pasquotank County, under the care of Elder Lemuel Pendleton, a licentiate; Wiccacon, Bertie

County, under the care of Elder Robert Hendry; Sawyer's Creek, Camden County, under the care of Elder Thomas Etheridge; Trent, Jones County, under the care of Elder John Dillahunty; Hadnot's Creek, Carteret County, under the care of Elder James Sanders; and Bear Creek in Dobbs (Lenoir) County, under the care of Elder Abram Baker.

In addition to these North Carolina churches the following Virginia churches came into the Association in the period from 1782 to 1790: Northwest River Bridge, Norfolk County; Shoulder's Hill, Nansemond County; Pungo and Black Water, Princess Anne County; South Quay, Black Creek and Meherrin, Southampton County; Fountain Creek and Great Creek, Brunswick County; Otterdam and Seacock, Sussex County; Cut Banks and Rowanty, Dinwiddie County.

It was natural for the Virginia churches to come into the Association, but the North Carolina churches were many of them among the number that had followed with their leaders of the old Kehukee in rejecting the policy advocated in 1775 by Burkitt and the Virginia ministers. It was evidently with some reluctance that some of them joined the new body. We have seen that in the years immediately succeeding the division the United Baptist Association of Burkitt appointed committees to seek a plan of union with the Regular Baptist churches, but the first of these committees did nothing because of the death of Elder James Bell, one of its members, while any plans the others may have had were interrupted by the War. In 1785 the Association again appointed a committee, consisting of Elders Jesse Read and John Meglamre and brothers Charles Champion and Thomas Gardner to meet the Regular Baptist brethren in Conference and seek to agree on terms of reconciliation. This committee reported in May the next year, when the Association met at the house of Brother Joshua Freeman in Bertie County, recommending the following terms of union:

> 1. We think that none but believers in Christ have a right to the ordinance of baptism; therefore we will not hold communion of those who plead for the validity of baptism in unbelief.
> 2. We leave every church member to decide for himself whether he has been baptized in unbelief or not.
> 3. We leave every minister at liberty to baptize, or not, such persons as desire to be baptized, being scrupulous about their former baptism.

In these conciliatory terms the Association agreed, but left their ratification to the several churches. The moderation of the recommendations is indicative of a liberal spirit on the part of their authors, who seem to have contemplated winning not only the churches of the Regular Baptists but also the Separates. Under their terms the Separate Baptist churches of eastern North Carolina began to come into the Association. In 1788 at the meeting at the Falls of the Tar, the churches at Newport and at New River, two of the most prominent Separate churches in their section, were received, and at the same session the following resolution was passed:

> That those bars which heretofore subsisted between the Baptists amongst us, formerly called Regulars and Separates, be taken down; and that a general union and communion take place according to the terms proposed at brother Joshua Freeman's, in Bertie County, May, 1786; and that the names Regular and Separate be buried in oblivion, and that we should henceforth be known to the world by the name United Baptist.

In the previous year the Baptists in Virginia had agreed on union on the same basis; the resolution of the Kehukee Association repeats the language of the Virginia resolution.

Thus finally all the Baptist churches of eastern North Carolina, with the exception of two or three of the Free Will order, were united in one Assocation. The General Baptists had been either supplanted by the Regular Baptists or incorporated in their churches, and all together now were united with the Separate Baptists, and all lines of division declared obliterated. I have elsewhere indicated at some length the contribution that each of the three made to the body that resulted from their union.[33] Dr. Hufham makes this brief statement:[34]

> Each of the schools had its own dangerous tendencies and each made its own contribution to the body of truth which was finally adopted. The tendency of the General Baptists was towards increasing laxity on doctrine and life; of the Regular Baptists towards antinomianism and the form without the power of Godliness; of the Separates towards mere enthusiasm. Each of these tendencies was the result of failure to apprehend the symmetry of doctrine; or of holding one truth without regarding its relation to other truths. And in the union of them all, each school contributed something which the others lacked: The General Baptists modifying the high Calvinism of the Regular Baptists, and so checking their tendency to antinomianism; the Regulars impressing on the others the importance of correct doctrinal views and especially of the sovereignty of God; the Separates receiving something from both the others and imparting to them a due recognition of the absolute necessity of the Spirit's work in the human soul and the consequent reality of Christian experience.

When at a meeting of the Association in October, 1789, the last of churches of the old Kehukee came into the new organization, the Kehukee was indeed an immense Association, embracing all the churches of its order in the territory south of the James to the South Carolina line and as far west as a line north and south through the site of the present city of Raleigh, not only a large district in Virginia but also about half of North Carolina. It consisted of 61 churches which contained 5,017 members.

At the meeting of 1782, the first after the War, the Association was already felt to be too large. A motion was made to divide it, but an alternative plan was adopted providing for four General Conferences, each at a place convenient for a group of churches, these conferences to deal with such matters as usually came before the Association and to report their proceedings to the next general meeting. After one year this arrangement was discontinued, and in their places four occasional Associations were provided, which were to receive letters reporting the affairs of the churches, and keep minutes which were to be transmitted to the regular annual meeting. After a year, in 1784, it was agreed to hold only one occasional Association, which should be in the month of October, while the regular Association should be in May as usual. This continued until October, 1786, when at a meeting at South Quay, Virginia, it was decided to have two Associations a year, one in Virginia and the other in North Carolina; that each branch should have all the powers of the full Association, and its sessions should be attended by five ministers and other representatives from the other branch. But this arrangement was discontinued after a year, and a new plan was adopted to have two meetings of the Association for all the churches every year, one to be in each of the States. This plan was formally ratified in a Constitution of the Association adopted in 1789, but the question of division of the Association would not down. At the Virginia meeting, at Reedy Creek in Brunswick County, in May, 1790, it again came up for discussion. In the following October, at a meeting at Davis's Meeting House (Concinnary), "after a long deliberation on the subject it was resolved that the Association be divided into two distinct Associations, and that the State line between Virginia and North Carolina be the dividing line between the two Associations, and that they should constantly visit each other by two delegates and a letter of correspondence."[35]

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[33] In a paper, "The Event in its Background," read at the Centennial Session of the Baptist State Convention at Greenville, N. C., March 26-27, 1930, and published in its *Proceedings.*

[34] *N. C. Baptist Historical Papers,* II, 45.

Returning now to the meeting of the Association of 1782, we find that among those present on that occasion were Elder Silas Mercer and Abraham Marshall, son of the famous

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[35] This whole account is based on matter gleaned from Burkitt and Read's *Kehukee Association.*

Daniel Marshall. These two and David Barrow were appointed to preach on Sunday, such appointment always being regarded as a recognition of exceptionable ability as a preacher.[36] Mr. Mercer, some account of whose life is given in the note below, was a native of Currituck County, and had been reared a Churchman. He left North Carolina for Georgia in 1775. Though he had previously adopted Baptist views he was not baptized until he had gone to Georgia, when he became a member of Kioka church, founded by Elder Daniel Marshall. Soon after he began to preach. Upon the British invasion of his State in 1776 he fled for safety to Halifax County, North Carolina, and for the next six years he was incessantly engaged in preaching in different places around. According to the statement in his journal during this six-year period he preached on the average oftener than once a day, in all more than two thousand sermons. He returned to Georgia soon after the meeting of the Association in 1782. In Halifax he served both the church at Lower Fishing Creek and at Kehukee. During his extensive travels as an itinerant preacher he visited Washington County and joined with Elder John Page in establishing the church of Morattuck Creek in 1780. He preached also in Tyrrell County where he joined with Elders Page and John Stansil in gathering the church on the Scuppernong. He was indefatigable in his labors and for years no Baptist minister traveled more and preached more than he.[37]

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[36] Mercer was one of those who in their early years had been Churchmen and became converts to the Baptist view. As he offers a somewhat typical example of a certain class of converts among early North Carolina Baptists, I am giving here an account of his conversion and early ministry abridged somewhat from the sketch in Benedict's *History of the Baptists,* II, 357ff. Silas Mercer was born near Currituck Bay, N. C., February, 1745. His mother died while he was an infant, but his father being a zealous member of the Church of England carefully instructed him in the way of that church. From boyhood he was religiously inclined and thought much on religious matters, but for many years he was bewildered and embarrassed by that legal system of his mother church. It was only after he came to manhood that he was brought to a knowledge of salvation through a divine Redeemer. Until his conversion he had been most violently opposed to Dissenters in general and Baptists in particular. He would on no account go to hear one preach, and tried to dissuade others from attending their meetings, believing, as his father had taught him, that they were deceivers, and preachers of most damnable heresies, while for one to hear their preaching would be a crime of peculiar enormity. But he was not content to go by hearsay; he began to make inquiries on his own account. Thus little by little he was led to accept the Baptist view. First, he decided that immersion was the correct mode of baptism, as indeed was taught in the rubrics of his church. Accordingly, he had two of his children dipped, the first, a son, in a barrel of water at the priest's house, and the other, a daughter, in a tub prepared for the purpose at the church. He was also repelled from his mother church by the lack of discipline and the gross immorality of some admitted to its communion. After ineffectual labors to effect a reform, he reluctantly left the church of his father and became a Baptist, being then about thirty years old. From that time to the end of his life he was an ornament to the cause of the Baptists and a skillful defender of their distinguishing tenets. He had been brought to the Baptist view partly by hearing the preaching of Mr. Thomas, probably Elder Jonathan Thomas, but was not baptized until after his removal to Georgia in 1775. Because of the active hostilities of the Revolution in that State he returned to North Carolina and spent here six years during the war.

He was not alone in his labors. The Baptist preachers of eastern North Carolina seem to have been very active during the period of the Revolutionary War. The region of the old Albemarle, from the Chowan River eastward to the sea, was free from hostile invasion. The ministers laboring in this section at this time were Elder Henry Abbot, pastor of the church now called Shiloh, and Elders John Gamewell and Thomas Etheridge. At the beginning of this period Shiloh was the only constituted church from Pasquotank eastward. But it had several branches in Camden and Currituck, one of which, Cowenjock, became a constituted church in 1780. It had already erected a meeting house and had two local preachers, Jonathan Barnes and William Lurry. In Camden, Sawyer's Creek was so near that its membership was somewhat confused with that of the parent church. Crossing the Pasquotank, the Camden ministers were preaching at this time to congregations at Knobscrook, two miles from Elizabeth City, "the metropolis of Pasquotank," which was constituted into a church in 1786, and Flatty Creek, afterwards called Newbiggin (now Salem), where they had gathered a congregation as early as 1772. At Yoppim, which was constituted in 1775, though a congregation had been gathered much earlier, Elder Henry Abbot continued to preach for several years. At this time it had among its members two who exercised the ministerial function. These were Elders Henry Done and William Cole. The former was a pious, aged bachelor, with a remarkable gift of prayer, but not so able in his preaching. The latter was a converted sailor, who had some eccentricities, among them a belief that he was able to perform miracles. But say Burkitt and Read, "he was at length measurably convinced that the power of working miracles was ceased, from an attempt he made to cut off one of his toes with a razor, and had partly done so, but could not heal it." He was baptized by Elder John Winfield, a General Baptist of Beaufort County, and afterward preached for short periods in succession at Yoppim, Princess Anne County, Virginia, and in Bertie and Hertford. In 1785 he left this country, as a master of a vessel bound for the West Indies, but was never heard of again.[38]

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[37] *Kehukee Association*, pp. 221, 228, 236.

The number of converts around Ballard's Bridge, where Burkitt and Dargan had worked so effectively in 1772, continued to increase, until they became sufficient for the constitution of a church, which was made in 1781. Their pastor was Elder Welsh, one of the converts of the revival of 1772, who began to preach soon after that time and had since been laboring in the Ballard Bridge neighborhood.

In Bertie Elder Jeremiah Dargan continued his labors around Cashie and in the lower end of the county. Around Wiccacon his labors were much blessed and he soon had gathered a congregation, which contained "as many worthy members as perhaps any in the union."[39] In upper Bertie Elder Lemuel Burkitt was continuing his successful work at Sandy Run and at the branch at Potecasi.

West and south of the Roanoke there was during the time of the Revolution no less religious activity. The work of Elder Silas Mercer has already been spoken of. The church at Rocky Swamp, under the care of Elder Jesse Read, was very active at this time. It established numerous branches, one at Davis's Meeting House (Concinnary), near the Roanoke, where the Association was held in 1783; another at Quankey.

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[38] *Kehukee Association,* p. 132f.

[39] *Kehukee Association,* p. 206.

In Warren and Franklin the period of the Revolution saw no diminution in the zeal of Elder William Walker. In 1772 he had established the church of Sandy Creek, Franklin County, as a distinct church, and continued his labors there so effectively that a few years later it sent off a branch at Poplar Springs.

Further east the church at the Falls of Tar River continued under the care of Elder John Moore until 1780 when he took a dismission and became an itinerant preacher, probably laboring at first among the congregations which his son, Elder John Moore, Junior, had gathered on Three Creeks, that is Swift's Creek, Middle Creek and Black Creek, which all rise in Wake and flow through Johnston. In this section John Moore, Junior, had begun to labor very early, if indeed, as Asplund says, the church at Swift Creek in Wake County, of which he was pastor, was established as early as 1757. Of this church he was still pastor as late as 1793. During the period of the Revolution and before some of the ablest and most prominent men of this section, such as Colonel Hardy Sanders, were members of his churches, and its inhabitants have remained predominantly Baptist until this day. A branch of the church of Swift Creek was Neal's Creek in Cumberland County. Rev. Hugh McAden found Baptists in this section in 1756; probably the congregation was already meeting before 1781.

During the period of the Revolution the church at Toisnot having a few years previously been bereft of her great pastor, Elder Jonathan Thomas, was in a languishing condition, but one of its former branches, that on Little Contentnea, known also by the name of Meadow, became active at this time, and shortly after, in 1785, was constituted into a church with Elder Joshua Barnes as pastor. At the same time the venerable Joseph Parker was still serving a General Baptist congregation on the Little Contentnea, and continued in that pastorate until 1790. (Asplund). Elder Joshua Barnes, whose labors were abundantly blessed in all this section, also gathered a congregation at Lower Town Creek in Edgecombe County, and constituted a church there on September 17, 1780. During the Revolutionary period Elder John Page also was very active in his labors in the counties of Pitt and Martin. In 1776, the church of Flat Swamp, on the confines of these two counties,[40] was established and called Elder Page to its pastorate. He labored with great zeal, and his labors were greatly blessed and the church increased and the work spread further. We have seen that Mr. Page joined with Elder Silas Mercer in gathering the churches at Morattuck and on the Scuppernong. The church at Flat Swamp established four branches, probably most of them during the time of the War, from which were afterwards constituted the independent churches of Great Swamp, on the Tar River, eight miles from Greenville; Skewarkey, near Williamston; Connoho (Log Chapel, Martin County) and Little Conetoe, eight miles southeast of Tarboro. Some of the members who afterwards formed the church at Cross Roads in Edgecombe County were also Page's converts. Thus it appears that this work at Flat Swamp was one of the most extensive in eastern North Carolina during the years from 1776 to 1783. One of its ministering brethren, however, Rev. John Stansil, became a "Universalian" and being "arch, cunning and insinuating," carried away many with his craft, through the subtlety of

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[40] Flat Swamp was in Pitt according to Burkitt and Read, p. 211, but in Martin according to Hassell. *Church History*, p. 553.

Satan. In Wayne, during the same period Rev. Reuben Hayes, afterwards pastor of Toisnot, was preaching in the neighborhood of Naughunty. Beginning his labors there about 1781 he constituted the church of that name in 1791. The church at Red Banks was at this time without a regular pastor, but the church organization was kept up by such influential members as John Moye and William Travis, the latter of whom "used to exhort and teach in the church, until November, 1784, when he was dismissed and went to Georgia." It entered upon a new period of increase when Elder Abram Baker assumed the pastorate on June 8, 1782.

In the region between the Neuse and the South Carolina line the Baptists were very active in these years. In Craven and Jones, Elders John Dillahunty, James Brinson and Joseph and James Willis were ministering to the religious needs of the people. In Onslow, the church on New River was under the care of Elder Robert Nixon, who had succeeded Elder Ezekiel Hunter, and was busily engaged in preaching the gospel to congregations in Carteret, where as a result of his labors the church at Newport River was established in 1778, and in Jones, and in other places as far south as Lockwood's Folly, where the church seems to have undergone a new constitution in 1779. In Duplin and New Hanover, Elder William Cooper began his labors during this time, preaching at the church at Bull Tail, now Wells' Chapel. He seems to have labored also in Bladen at the same time. (Asplund.)

This account, though often details are lacking, is sufficient to show that on the whole the Baptists of eastern North Carolina had been zealous and active in their labors during the period of the Revolution. The close of that period found them more numerous and the number of their churches greater than at the beginning. But the old preachers were already passing off the scene of action. Some were dead, others growing old, others leaving the State. After this time we hear no more of Elders George Graham and Henry Ledbetter. When Morgan Edwards was here in 1772 the former was living but already "past his labors." Elder John Tanner went to Kentucky in 1781. Elder Henry Abbot was already old, and there is no record of his attending a regular session of the Association after the War, though he lived until 1791. Elder William Walker, the revered pastor of the church at Reedy Creek and its branches, died in 1784. The Association now had one great leader in North Carolina. This was Elder Lemuel Burkitt, pastor of the church at Sandy Run. All loved and trusted him. In the churches of the Association south and west of the Roanoke only ministers of moderate abilities were to be found, though some of them were men of much zeal and industry. Among these the ablest were Elder Jesse Read of Halifax, Elder John Page of Pitt, and Elder Joshua Barnes of Edgecombe. Further south, in the region between the Neuse and the South Carolina line, were a few able men, such as Elders James Brinson, John Dillahunty, Robert Nixon, Fleet Cooper and William Cooper. In a few years these were removed either by death or migration and in some instances their places were never filled.

The supply of ministers was by no means adequate to meet the needs of the Baptist churches. This was due partly to the fact that in colonial North Carolina there had been no schools able to give the educational equipment necessary for a minister of the gospel, while such schools as did exist were doubtless interrupted in their work by the War. But it was also partly due to the failure of the churches to provide a proper support for ministers. Mr. J. W. Moore, in his manuscript history of North Carolina Baptists, suggests two other reasons for the deficiency of ministers at this time. One was the attention given by young men to politics. The minds of the abler young men were wholly engrossed in political controversies between the followers of Jefferson and those of Hamilton. The other reason was the spread of infidelity among the educated and intelligent classes of our people. Both of these influences had already begun to operate at this time though they did not reach their climax until a few years later.[41]

The causes mentioned had brought it about that ministers were too few to minister to all the churches. At its session of 1787 the Association adopted a resolution of Elder David Barrow recommending that the churches "search among themselves for such members as have useful gifts and pressingly lay upon them to exercise them without delay."[42] The churches were already ordaining what were known as itinerant ministers, who of their own initiative traveled among the churches and in places where there were no churches, preaching wherever they could gather a congregation, making and baptizing converts. In some instances they were specially ordained for this work and not as ministers of churches.[43] This practice of baptizing converts without requiring them to become members of some church had been common for many years and was formally authorized by the Association in 1784.[44]

Up to this time the Baptist cause had been greatly advanced by itinerant preaching. It was the one method of missionary work known to these early churches. Among the General Baptists these traveling ministers had been known as evangelists. Such were Paul Palmer, Joseph Parker, and Josiah Hart. Their practice had continued among the Regular Baptists. In our previous narrative we have seen that Elders Henry Abbot, Lemuel Burkitt and Silas Mercer, among others, went on long missionary journeys. With the multiplication of churches the call for such ministers arose not only to preach the gospel in new places but also to minister to churches who had no minister because either of the death or removal of their former minister. That the number of such churches was great was revealed by the church letters from year to year.[45]

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[41] Mr. Moore says: "Instead of the deep interest, which was of old vouchsafed to all religious movements the people had come to seek entertainment and instruction from stump speakers and in the thousands of debating clubs all over the land. These latter became great nuisances in many sections. Instead of enlightening the popular mind they were too often mere propaganda of French Atheism. A disgusting agnosticism became popular with the young men of America, who desired to be thought intelligent." MS. History, Chap. VIII.

[42] *Kehukee Association,* p. 89.

[43] For instance, Elder Amos Harrell and Elder Noah Tison, *Kehukee Association,* 219, 220.

[44] *Kehukee Association,* p. 69. Query. x. "Has an itinerant minister, who has not the care of a church, a right to baptize on any occasion?" Ans. "We suppose he has not a right on all occasions, but only on some. The occasions which we conceive he has a right to baptize on are as follows, viz. 1. When he visits a church destitute of a pastor, and is called by the church to baptize. 2. When he travels into dark places destitute of ministerial helps, and persons get converted and desire baptism of him and are not capable to make application to any church by reason of their distance from them."

In this situation Elder David Barrow, pastor of the churches at Mill Swamp and South Quay, Virginia, sought to lead the Association to send forth and support a sufficient number of itinerant ministers to meet the need. His great missionary zeal justifies saying something more of him here. We have seen that he began his ministry when he was yet barely twenty years of age. He was one of the supporters of Burkitt when the division came at the Falls of the Tar. Now ten years later he had greatly improved his mind by seeking intruction from every quarter and applying himself to reading. "His preaching and conversation," says Semple, "were admired. Mr. Barrow had no notion of preaching barely for the sake of being admired. He sought the salvation of men; he sought it earnestly. Receiving from heaven the bread of life, he dealt out to each one his portion in due season. He traveled and preached far and wide. Jesus was with him and gave him many seals. His spotless character as a Christian greatly aided his pulpit labors. All who knew him at all knew that he was a good man."[46]

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[45] *Kehukee Association*, p. 87. [46] *History of Virginia Baptists*, p. 359f.

It was at the meeting of the Association at South Quay in 1786 that Mr. Barrow first brought this matter of itinerant ministers before the Association. In general his plan, which he continued to urge until his removal to Kentucky in 1798, was to have four able ministers of the Association each of them visit in succession the several churches and other places preaching the gospel. For their support he would have the several churches make contributions to be distributed equally to all the itinerants. Further he would have the churches "search among themselves for such members as have useful gifts" and advise them to engage in the work, "not only amongst the churches but in other places where it may appear necessary." In 1786, 1787, 1788, and 1790, he urged his plan upon the Association, and from first to last secured the approbation of the majority of the delegates present, who time and again referred the matter to the churches for ratification, but never with success. The great majority of the churches always found some fault with the plan. Five years after the division of the Association, Elder Barrow, then a visitor at the meeting of the Kehukee Association at Yoppim, induced the Association to encourage its ministers to travel and preach on a prescribed plan. But although the plan was voted it was only partially carried out and was dropped after a year or two.[47]

There was one rock on which all these plans put forth from year to year broke. That rock was the unwillingness of many to contribute to its support. In this respect Mr. Barrow and his church at South Quay, Virginia, were far in advance of any other minister and church of the Association. This church had learned the true missionary spirit.

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[47] *Kehukee Association,* pp. 86ff., 88, 89, 91f., 103f., 110f., 119f., 122f. "All attempts for the encouragement of itinerant preaching proved ineffectual, until the Association at Yoppim in 1796(5). Then a new plan was laid and put into execution at the time appointed. But we believe that only two of the four ministers who were appointed traveled through all the churches, viz., Elder Burkitt and Elder M'Cabe. We still believe that if ministers would travel and preach more that it would prove a blessing to the churches."

At this time it had in its membership a number who had great zeal for the spread of the gospel. "The piety, zeal and usefulness of Holland Darden, Elisha Darden, John Lawrence and others who were once members in this church will ever reflect honor on their memory."[48] The plan of this church in raising money for this missionary enterprise was brought before the Association at its meeting at Raccoon Swamp, Virginia, in 1788. It was as follows:

> By raising a fund in the first place, by their own contribution. 2. By public collections from the inhabitants twice in the year at least, which money so collected is deposited in the hands of some person, and subject to the orders of the church, to be appropriated to the aid of any and every traveling preacher, whom they shall judge to be sent of God to preach. And they conceive that such a plan with them alone, beautiful as it appears, will not answer the desired purpose; therefore (they) have thought it necessary to present it to this Association for their approbation.

Here then was this noble church at this early date already engaged in doing missionary work in the most approved modern way, and asking the coöperation of the other churches of the Association. But when the Association had referred the matter to these churches the churches failed to respond in like spirit.

In fact, it is clear that the reason so many of the churches were without ministers was because they were unwilling to provide a minister a living support. This question of lack of support of ministers was early before the Association. At the session of 1787 a pious deacon bent on giving his minister a support asked what course should be pursued with members who refused to contribute. To this the Association replied:

> It is our opinion that it is the member's duty voluntarily to contribute to the minister's support, and if the deacon discovers any member remiss in his duty that he shall cite him to the church;

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[48] *Kehukee Association*, p. 269.

and if the church finds him negligent in his duty, we give it as our advice, that the church should deal with him for covetousness.[49]

Alas, it seems that it was only the rare church that had such a deacon. In the greater number, deacons and other members alike were ready to cry out against the preacher who had regard for *filthy lucre.* Covetousness indeed, as the future proved, covetousness of the members generally rather than of the preachers, was what was really the matter with many churches of the Kehukee Association. The foul contagion was already abroad in the years 1782-90. The plague continues in places to this day. These churches desired preaching but found it comfortable to believe that the preacher should perform his sacred office without money and without price. "Freely ye have received, freely give," was a text they knew by heart, but was a rule of action to be observed only by ministers. And they most graspingly and without fear of contamination held on to the coins which they believed would become filthy lucre if received by a minister laboring for the Lord.

By precept, too, the minister was taught the sinfulness of preaching for money. At his ordination he was asked the question, "Do you, Sir, willingly, and not by constraint, out of a ready mind, and not for filthy lucre, devote yourself to the sacred office?" The approved answer was that "his view is not lucrative."[50]

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[49] *Ibid.,* p. 90.

[50] *Kehukee Association,* p. 80. On pages 77-82 is given a discussion of "A Minister's Call and Ordination," of which the following are the more distinguishing parts. "Learning is a very good handmaid, but we are far from supposing that it is essentially necessary for a man to be acquainted with the *oriental* languages before he is qualified to preach the gospel." "Upon the whole we suppose that it is necessary every minister of Christ should, in the first place, be truly converted and regenerated by the grace of God, that he have a general acquaintance with the word of God, and that he should be called of God to preach the gospel." "An evidence of his call, for his own satisfaction, is, first, if his views in preaching the gospel be not for the sake of lucre, nor for honor nor applause; but secondly if he aim at the glory of God and the good of souls an evidence of his call to the satisfaction of others, is, first, his spiritual understanding of the word of God; second, his ability in explaining the meaning of the word; third,

There can be no doubt that the insistence of this view had a very deleterious effect on the liberality of the churches in the years immediately following the Revolutionary War. Even Lemuel Burkitt seemed to be strongly infected with it. But before the division of the Association there had already risen in the church at Skewarkey a young preacher who believed that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and who was to use his voice and pen to urge a proper support for the ministry. This was Martin Ross. Born in Martin County, North Carolina, November 27, 1762, "at an early age," says Meredith, "he obeyed the call of this country" and became a soldier in the Continental line. In January, 1782, he was baptized by Elder John Page into the membership of Flat Swamp church, of which Skewarkey was a branch. He was licensed to preach in 1784, and ordained pastor of the Skewarkey church in March, 1787, which church in the same year he represented at the meeting of the Association. In 1796 he moved to Yoppim, where he labored with much acceptance for ten years, and in 1806 he became pastor of Bethel church in Perquimans County, "a church which had been formed under his own hand," (Meredith), which he served until his death in 1827.

In the year of the division, 1790, Ross was appointed to write the circular letter. This he presented at the next meeting of the Association, the first after the division, at Flat

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the success of his ministry in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints. It is necessary that a person thus called to the ministry, should preach on trial for some time, and when the church is satisfied with his call and usefulness, he shall then be set apart by fasting and prayer, by the hands of the Presbytery." Questions from the ordination form suggested: "Do you take the Bible to be the word of God, in such a sense as to hold yourself bound to believe all it declares; to do all it requires of you as a Christian; to abstain from all it forbids? Do you consider that book as the only rule of faith and practice in matters of religion; and a sufficient rule, so that there is no occasion for any other judge of controversies; or for creeds, confessions of faith, traditions, or acts of councils of any denominations, to supply its supposed defects? Do you hold that book your creed or confession of faith; and will you make it your directory, whether in preaching, administering ordinances, exercising government and discipline, or in performing any other branch of your function?"

Swamp, Pitt County. Its subject was "On the Maintenance of the Ministry." It was the first of those important labors of Ross by which he led the Baptists of North Carolina to become a progressive people and later to unite in forming the State Convention. As well for its intrinsic as its historic value I give it here in somewhat abridged form.

And according to the direction of our last Association, (Mr. Ross says after some words of introduction), we proceed in our circular letter, at this time, to make a few observations on the necessary support or maintenance of gospel ministers; although we are very sorry that there should be the least occasion to write or speak upon that subject.

We apprehend that one principal reason why the churches have been so remiss in this duty is because the people were for a number of years grievously oppressed by an eccelesiastical establishment in raising money by taxation for the support of ministers of a contrary sentiment, many of whom they had reason to fear God never sent to preach, but only preached for hire and divined for money, and regarded the fleece more (than) the flock. To shun this extreme many zealous preachers, who abhorred their works of darkness and deceit, being sensible that such men crept into the ministry for the sake of filthy lucre, have thought it their duty to bear testimony against them. But not being careful to distinguish between *living of the gospel of Christ,* and being *supported by the laws of men,* these zealots have injudiciously condemned the practice of receiving anything at all as a reward for ministerial labors, and so have fallen into an error on the other hand. It is therefore necessary that a just mediocrity be observed between the two extremes.

To guard against error on both hands, it is necessary, dear brethren, that we should make the holy Scriptures the rule of our faith and practice. That ministers have a divine right to maintenance from the people is evident:

1. From the express declaration of Jesus Christ. Matt. x 9-10; Luke x. 9.

2. This right the Apostles published throughout the world. I Cor. ix. 14, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."

3. This divine right of the minister's maintenance is manifested by the law of nature. Deut. xxv. 4; I Tim. v. 8. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn—and the laborer is worthy of his hire."

4. By the *law of nations.* "Who goeth to a warfare at any time of his own charges"? I Cor. ix. 7.

5. By the law of farmers, graziers, vine-planters, reapers, threshers, etc. I Cor. ix. 7, 10-11.

6. By the *Levitical law.* I Cor. ix. 13.

Thus have we, dear brethren, clearly proven from express scripture that the ministers of the gospel are justly entitled to a comfortable maintenance from the people. The minister's support should be *sufficient* and *plentiful,* because they are enjoined *hospitality.* The matter of their maintenance is expressed in terms so general as to leave the people at liberty to pay them in *kind,* or *value, all good things.* The manner of paying is cheerfully, and not grudgingly. The contributors are all who "are taught in the word."

The truth of these things, beloved brethren, we make no doubt you are convinced of, but the neglect of them is too glaring to us, yourselves and others. We cannot but feel exceeding sorry on this account. The consequences arising therefrom are very pernicious. By this sad neglect the poor ministers of the gospel are necessarily obliged to follow their worldly avocations for the support of themselves and their families, which prevents them from reading the Holy Scriptures, meditating, preaching constantly, and giving themselves wholly to the work—which weakens their hands, dulls their ideas, cools their zeal, and of necessity they are not so profitable to the churches, nor to the cause of Christ in general. These things, in a measure, you must be sensible of. . . .

Thus have we, dear brethren, . . . endeavored to consider this important duty, and now permit us affectionately and solemnly to call upon you to consider our adorable Master's weighty and powerful expostulations—"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" . . .

Thus in 1791 Martin Ross had already seen the cankerous evil that was already preying on the Baptists of North Carolina and checking their development as individuals and as a denomination. It was this same evil of covetous disregard of their duty to contribute for the spread of the kingdom of God in the world that a few years later was to lead great numbers of them further from their duty, and make them deny any obligation to use human means in fostering missions and educational institutions. Soon Martin Ross was to go from Skewarkey to Yoppim, and leave no one like himself south of the Roanoke, who knew how to instruct the people in the duty of providing for those who were over them in the Lord. There were indeed still several devout ministers in that section, men like John Page, Joshua Barnes, and Reuben Hayes. They gave freely of their own labors for the spread of the gospel. But they did not develop their churches in the grace of liberality. Thus the ministry there grew weaker both in numbers and efficiency. When the test came in 1827 it was found that a majority even of the ministers were of the reactionary type, and the Kehukee Association became non-missionary. On the other hand the section to which Ross had gone and which felt his influence became the center of Baptist development in the State. But of this more will be said later.

Some of the principles for which the Association stood in these years may be learned from the answers given to queries. In 1783 it still looked upon feet-washing as "a duty to be continued in the church," but it disapproved of what Elder John Leland called a "dry christening" that is, to have the minister take children in his arms and bless them and at the same time name them. This practice was still common in some of the Separate churches, especially those of Virginia.[51]

In regard to the Lord's Supper the Association made several expressions of opinion which make plain its position on that important matter. The one admitted to communion should first be converted, "and publicly declare the same by being *baptized* by *immersion*."[52] A member who absented himself from communion without reason should be dealt with by the church.[53] Severance of church relationship carried with it exclusion from communion, though the Association no longer thought it necessary to have the minister read the name of the excommunicated member at the next communion service, as was once the common practice.[54] At the session of May, 1786, it was declared disorderly "to hold communion with a member who frequents a Free-Mason lodge." At the same session the Association showed that it had not entirely discarded the sacramental view of the Lord's Supper and approved administering it under certain circumstances "to a single person in case of inability to attend public worship."[55] There was also at this time a disposition among some Baptists to follow Episcopal custom and celebrate the Supper at notable gatherings. At the meeting of the Roanoke Association of 1789 at Grassy Creek it was "unanimously agreed, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper be duly administered at every one of our associations upon the Lord's day."[56] Baptist writers of this period uniformly designate the church membership as those in communion, that is, those who partake of the Lord's Supper.

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[51] Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, 107.

[52] *Kehukee Association*, 72.

[53] *Ibid.*, 68.

The Association also made several strong pronouncements of its view that only those baptized by immersion should be admitted to communion. In 1777 in reply to the question, "What shall a church do with a minister who labours to make them believe that difference in judgment about water baptism ought to be no bar to communion?" the Association answered: "Such a practice is disorderly, and he who propagates the tenet ought to be dealt with as an offender." In 1783 the Association made the declaration quoted above that conversion and baptism should precede communion in the Lord's Supper.[57]

When one had once been baptized into the membership of a church he was expected to attend the communion service; if he absented himself without satisfactory reason the church should deal with him.[58]

In regard to baptism the Association in 1783 made one important pronouncement, declaring that a baptism if performed by an unauthorized minister was legal, "as it was done in faith."[59] The Charleston Association had a few years before taken the same position as to persons baptized by Paul Palmer, who being a General Baptist was disorderly in the opinion of that body.[60] A few years later this question of alien baptism was troubling the Philadelphia Baptists, who in several Associations decided against its validity.[61]

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[54] *Ibid.*, 68f. Minutes of Dutchman's Creek church.

[55] *Ibid.*, 86.

[56] *Rippon's Register*, I, 90.

[57] *Kehukee Association*, 52, 72.

[58] *Ibid.*, 68.

With reference to Deacons the Associations of 1788 declared that "their work is to serve tables, that is, the table of the Lord; the table of the minister, and the table of the poor; and for to see that the church makes provision for them," and in 1800 that "deacons ought to be regularly ordained before they use the office of a deacon in any respect."[62]

Other pronouncements were that a woman ought not to speak in matters of discipline except on the matter of her own communion,[63] that no minister ought to be called to take charge of a church without the unanimous consent of the members,[64] and that the minister had the same right as any other member to a dismission from the church at his own request.[65]

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[59] *Kehukee Association*, 67f.

[60] Furman, *Charleston Association*, for 1773. The Association ruled: "Though Palmer was a disorderly person yet as he baptized according to the word of God persons baptized by him may be received into our churches upon satisfactory examination as to principles and Grace."

[61] The question first arose in the Philadelphia Association in 1787 when the First Church of New York submitted the following query: "Whether a person applying to one of our churches for admission as a member, and satisfies the church that he has been previously baptized by immersion, on a profession of faith in Christ; but at the same time confesses, the person who administered the ordinance was, at the time, neither ordained to the work of the ministry, nor baptized himself by immersion, but only chosen by a religious society to officiate as their teacher or minister, should be received." The matter was laid over for a year and in 1788 the Association replied that it deemed "such baptism null and void," and gave four reasons for its action, declaring that "to admit such baptisms as valid would make void the ordinances of Christ, throw contempt on his authority, and tend to confusion." And it was further declared, "Of this opinion we find were our Associations in time past; who put a negative on such baptisms in 1729, 1732, 1744, 1748, and 1768." After Rev. Abraham Booth of London had suggested, in 1791, that the Association reconsider its action, it again negatived the validity of such baptisms. *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, 229, 238, 270, 282.

[62] *Kehukee Association*, 93, 130. [63] *Ibid.*, 76. [64] *Ibid.*, 73. [65] *Ibid.*, 73.

The Association showed that it believed in liberty of conscience, even for slaves. The question arose in a query as to what a master of a family should do with his slaves who refuse to attend family prayers. The answer, which is worthy of record, is as follows:

> We think it the duty of every master of a family to give his slaves liberty to attend the worship of God in his family; and likewise it is his duty to exhort them to it, and endeavor to convince them of their duty; and then leave them to their choice.[66]

During the years before the division, the Association as a whole had had the advantage of the counsel of the able ministers both of Virginia and North Carolina. Elder John Meglamre of Virginia served as Moderator, and Elder David Barrow took the lead in all progressive measures. Able visiting ministers were often present. In 1785 Elder John Leland attended the Association which met at Shoulder's Hill, and joined with Barrow in getting action on the matter then before the Virginia Legislature with reference to a general tax for the support of all the churches, the last desperate measure of those who were endeavoring to make the churches in Virginia the fosterlings of the State. This matter was wisely left by the Association to those delegates who resided in that State.

In May, 1789, Elder Isaac Backus, author of the famous Baptist History of New England, was present at the meeting of the Association, and continued for several weeks preaching among the churches of this section. He found a congregation of two thousand at one meeting.[67]

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[66] *Ibid.*, 70.

[67] *Rippon's Register,* I, 93f. "Last September, our Association received an earnest request from our brethren in Virginia, for some of our labourers to come over and help them. I was nominated and appointed by the Association; and though I did not think, at first, it would do for me to go, being 65 years of age, the 20th of last January, yet I was at length convinced of duty. I sailed from Rhode Island, January 2, and landed in North Carolina the 10th; betwixt which and May 27, I traveled and preached in six counties in that State, and twenty-three in Virginia, and

Of the 61 churches of the Association before the division 42 were in North Carolina. Of these 37 were represented at the meeting at Flat Swamp, October 8, 1791. At this time the following churches were received: Morattuck Creek, Tyrrell, (Washington) County, supplied by Elder Martin Ross; Mattamuskeet, Hyde County, probably under care of Elder John Bray; Little Contentnea, Greene County, Elder Joshua Barnes pastor; Bear Marsh, Duplin County, Elder Charles Hines, pastor. In 1792, according to *Rippon's Register*,[68] "the churches in Wake, in Craven County, on North River, on Muddy Creek and on Pungo River, petitioned for admission; on satisfactory information of their doctrine and practice they were received." The church in Wake was that of Rogers's Cross Roads, under the care of Elders Jacob Crocker and Zadoc Bell (licentiate); that in Craven was Coor Creek, originally a branch of Swift Creek, and gathered by and under the care of Elder William Phipps from 1791 to 1797, when he moved to Tennessee. Of the church at Muddy Creek, Duplin County, Elder Job Thigpen was to become pastor in 1793. North River and Pungo were in Beaufort County; of both these churches Elder James McCabe was pastor.[69] The additions in 1793 were the church at Durham's Creek, Beaufort County, probably

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preached in the whole one hundred and seventeen sermons to very attentive audiences. I was at one Association in Chesterfield County, May 9, and at another in the Isle of Wight County, May 16, each of which held three days; and four sermons were preached on the 10th and 17th, perhaps to 2,000 people each day. Considering the former darkness they were in under Episcopal ministers, most of whom were drunkards, card-players, and swearers, it is wonderful to see what light and love they have attained. Three Baptist ministers went from New England to North Carolina about thirty-four years ago: from their labors a glorious reformation hath spread quite through to Georgia, where it is now going on powerfully. . . . My pen cannot give an adequate idea of what God hath done in these parts. Near a hundred Baptist ministers, or perhaps more, have of late years been raised up in Virginia, and others in North Carolina, many of whom I saw and heard, who seem to have a clear idea of doctrinal and experimental religion, and to be in earnest to maintain Gospel discipline in their churches."

[68] Vol. II, 64f.

[69] See Sketches of these churches in *Kehukee Association.*

under the care of Elder Elisha Dowty (licentiate); and the churches of Poplar Springs and Maple Springs in Franklin County, under the care of Elder William Lancaster.

The worth of Mr. Lancaster requires a word more, especially as he was one of the eight or ten of their brethren that the aroused Baptists sent to the Convention of 1788 to guard their religious liberties. He was a prominent citizen of Franklin County, living in the vicinity of Louisburg. In 1786 he was appointed by Act of the Legislature a member of the board of trustees of the "Lewisburg Academy," an institution whose successor is today Louisburg College. In 1788 and 1789 he was a member of the Conventions which considered the adoption of the Federal Constitution. In that of 1788 he opposed the adoption of the Constitution, and stated his objections in a speech which shows a clear understanding of the nature of that document. He pointed out the unlimited powers of Congress to lay taxes, the danger of making treaties the supreme law of the land, since they might not only supplant the Federal Constitution, but in effect repeal the laws of the different States and make nugatory the bill of rights. Under the Constitution a Papist might occupy the President's Chair. Again, he insisted, the long terms of the President and Senators with no provision for recall made it possible for them to disregard the wishes of the people. One other objection of Mr. Lancaster deserves notice. The Constitution, he said, left uncertain just what powers were given to the general government and what retained by the States; the people should not be too certain that the powers not given were definitely secured to the States; the fact that certain negative clauses were found in the Constitution forbidding the general government from exercising certain powers left it free to encroach on rights of the States in matters on which no statement was made. The history of the nation shows how well Mr. Lancaster's apprehensions were justified.

At the first meeting of the Association after sending off the Virginia churches, in 1791, thirty-seven churches had delegates at the session, which assembled at Sandy Run, Bertie County. At this meeting the Association agreed to encourage the publication of *The Baptist Annual Register*, by John Rippon of London, and subscribed for fifty copies. At the same time it appointed Elder Lemuel Burkitt correspondent of the periodical for the Association. He assumed this important work and for a dozen years contributed much valuable information on the religious affairs of the Baptists of eastern North Carolina and probably in this way equipped himself for writing the history of the Kehukee Association. Though this latter work contains most of what he contributed to the *Register*, yet some of his contributions were fuller and sometimes on matters which he has not discussed in the history.[70]

In 1792 the Association met at Bear Creek in Lenoir County. At this meeting Elders Burkitt, Read and Ross were appointed a committee to prepare a form of ceremony to solemnize the rite of matrimony, and to make report at the next meeting of the Association. It will be recalled that such a form was adopted by the Association (old Kehukee) in 1777, but this had probably been lost. No further record of the committee now appointed has been found. Again, at this meeting the question of the further division of the Association was discussed, and a committee of which Colonel Nathan Bryan was chairman, reported advising that the division be made, and that Tar River be the dividing line. The Association approved and referred the matter to the churches "to make their minds known in their letters to the Association at next meeting." At the next meeting, which was at Skewarkey in 1793, the division was approved. The Association had, before division, 49 churches and 3,440 members. Of these 26 were churches in the Kehukee and 23 in the Neuse.[71]

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[70] For instance Burkitt has omitted mention in his *History* that he was at this time appointed correspondent of the *Register*. Vol. I, 298. He has likewise omitted all details of the Association of 1792, which are to be found in the *Register*, II, 64ff.

In the years 1791-1793 the Association had as Moderators two distinguished men. These were Colonel Nathan Bryan of Jones County and Colonel Nathan Mayo of Martin County. Colonel Bryan served in this place only for the year 1793, after which time his church, Trent in Jones County, was a member of the Neuse Association. Mayo served first in 1791 and continuously thereafter until 1808, except for the years 1793, 1796, 1797, and 1803. Both were in that great group of Baptists who were sent by their fellow citizens to guard their interests in the Conventions of 1788 and 1789 on the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

In another section I have said something of Colonel Nathan Bryan; I add some things here. He was the son of Hardy Bryan whose will was probated in Craven County in 1760. He was often a member of the General Assembly and rose to the rank of Colonel in the Revolution. In the year 1796 he was elected to the lower house of Congress from his district and was serving in that office when he died in 1798. He was of a wealthy family and himself possessed of a considerable fortune. In 1781 the British under Major Craig visited his plantation and carried off sixty "prime" slaves.[72] But as distinguished as he was in public life he was no less so in his Christian walk and influence. And it was his regular, humble, and pious walk as a Christian that won for him the affection with which his brethren regarded him. Burkitt and Read thought fit to end their history with an account of his life, from which the following extract will indicate his devotion to the cause of religion:

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[71] *Kehukee Association,* 112ff.

[72] See Index of *Colonial Records* and references there cited. For will of Hardy Bryan see *Grimes, Wills.*

> It pleased the Lord to bring him to an experience of his grace through faith in Christ Jesus, and that at an early period of his life. He was baptized at 18 years of age, and became a member of the Southwest of Neuse, under the care of Elder M'Daniel, succeeded by Elder Dillahunty. Being a promising youth, he was called upon to represent the county in the General Assembly. He served in that capacity for a number of years, and although he was usually opposed, yet he always obtained his election when he offered as a candidate. Notwithstanding he was a man of abilities, and worthy to fill posts of honor and profit in the state, yet it was well known to his constituents that he sought no lucrative office; but from that patriotic spirit which he was possessed (of), the good of his country was his general aim. His public and private life was so regular, and agreeable to a christian character, that he clearly manifested to all his acquaintance his sincerity of heart, in that profession he made of Christ Jesus the Lord. His countenance was grave, yet commanding; and he was very affable in his addresses, and inferior to none of his age in learning. He was very careful to contribute to the relief of the poor saints, and ministers of the gospel. He was careful to fill his seat at the house of God on Conference days, and other days of preaching.
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> He was a man of such philanthropy that he wished well to all, and strove for peace amongst religious professors of every denomination, and amongst all men. . . . His promotion to honor did not make him look with contempt on a poor brother, or ever divert his mind from religion and the fear of the Lord; but true piety and holiness were his aim, by which he distinguished himself to be a servant of the meek and lowly Jesus. . . . He went to Congress, where he served the public until the year 1798, and the same year he died in the fiftieth year of his age—and was buried in the Baptist meeting house yard in Philadelphia. His funeral sermon was preached by Elder Ustic. And although this great good man of God is gone to receive his crown of life, yet he speaketh by his past pious life and undoubted character, which will render his memory dear to thousands, and reflect immortal honors on his name.[73]

Colonel Mayo won for himself a place as warm in the affection of his brethren. He was born on September 22, 1742. In the Revolution he was an ardent patriot, and rose to the rank of Colonel of Militia. He seems to have been somewhat retiring, but we have seen that his fellow citizens sent him to the Conventions of 1788 and 1789; in 1796 and 1797 he was called upon to represent his county in the State Senate. For this reason probably he was not Moderator of his Association in those years. "As long as mental faculties were retained the subject of religion was the burden of his song." He died March 14, 1811.[74]

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[73] *Kehukee Association,* 301ff.

In this connection it may be well to quote a contemporary statement made by Burkitt in a communication to *Rippon's Register*,[75] which indicates the nature of the membership of the Baptist churches of eastern North Carolina at this time. It is as follows:

> In North Carolina, we enjoy the exercise of liberty both civil and ecclesiastical, in the largest sense, so that the Baptists are as respectable as others. There are members of several churches in the Kehukee Association who are in the commission of the peace. Some act as sheriffs. One of the members of my church is high sheriff in the county of Northampton, another in the county of Hertford. Colonel Nathan Mayo, who was moderator in our last Association, had been a member of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina for many years. There are members in several churches who have served many years in the House of Commons, and others in the Senate. Upon the whole, there is hardly any post of profit or honor in the State but has been reputably filled by one or another of our Baptist brethren. Indeed, all pastors of churches are excluded a seat in the General Assembly of this State by our Constitution, but our ministers act as justices of the peace and in other offices; and some, who have not the charge of a congregation, have been honored with a seat in the Legislature. Our Brother, Peter Qualls, who lately departed this life, had been Senator for the county of Halifax for several years. But though we have ministers and members who are men of wealth and honor, most of our brethren in the ministry and the members in general are poor men.

After the second division the Kehukee had its first session in October, 1794, with the church of Lemuel Burkitt at Sandy Run. This session was memorable for the accession of the church at Meherrin which until this time had been a General Baptist church under the care of Elder William Parker. Mr. Parker had been in this station for probably forty years or more before his death in January, 1794.[76] In 1790 Asplund listed Meherrin as the only church in Hertford County. So long as this church remained under the care of Elder William Parker it had services every Sunday. From the time of the transformation in the other Baptist churches of the region begun in 1755 the church at Meherrin saw much trouble. Mr. Parker remained an Arminian, but soon there was division in his membership. In 1775 under the preaching of Burkitt a number of his best members made a defection and joined a congregation at Potecasi, which became a branch of Burkitt's church at Sandy Run. It seems that these members did not take this step until they had approached Mr. Parker and endeavored to influence him to adopt the Calvinistic view. But he remained steadfast in his Arminianism. Their secession caused a decline in the church. But the declension, however great, did not interfere with the rebuilding of a new meeting house, in place of their first which then had stood for forty years. At the expense and by the labor of the Parker family for the most part a new house of worship was constructed. Whatever may be said of his theology, Elder William Parker was a man of deep personal piety, of irreproachable morals and "deeply devoted to the spiritual interests of his flock." On his death a large concourse of people testified to their regard for his worth by attendance on his funeral. The sermon was preached by the ablest minister of the former Kehukee Association, Elder David Barrow, who came all the way from his church in the Isle of Wight for the purpose.

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[74] Biggs, *Kehukee Association*, 191ff.
[75] Vol. II, 204f.

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[76] As early as 1748, according to Morgan Edwards, Joseph Parker, the first minister of the Meherrin Church, had been preaching to the congregation afterwards constituted as the church at Fishing Creek (Daniel's Meeting House). In 1761 Joseph Parker was on the Contentnea. The only reason for supposing that 1773 is the date when William Parker assumed the pastorate of the Meherrin church is the statement of Burkitt (*Kehukee Association,* 203) that "Elder William Parker was in the exercise of the pastoral function as early as 1773." This means no more than that Parker was already pastor when Burkitt first came to this section and assumed the care of the Sandy Run church. There is every reason to suppose that Parker had already been in the pastorate twenty-five years in 1773.

It is probable that, in his severe censure of Mr. Parker, Wheeler, *Meherrin Church*, was only repeating things said by Calvinists against all General Baptists, and that most of the disturbance in his church was due rather to the natural desire of the members to conform to the standards of the neighboring Baptist churches and possibly the proselyting zeal of Burkitt than to any disorders engendered by Mr. Parker's looseness in receiving members. One would suppose from Wheeler's statement that the church had dwindled to nothingness in 1794; but according to Asplund it contained about 100 members. In the divided church there was doubtless "the frequent exhibition of unsanctified feeling," spoken of in Wheeler's account. After the death of Mr. Parker, Burkitt organized a small church on the Calvinistic plan, and it was this small reorganized church that was now admitted to the Association.

The Association now was to be free from further division for a period of eleven years. I give here the times and places of its various meetings.

September 27, 1794. Sandy Run.
September 23, 1795. Yoppim, Chowan County.
September 22, 1796. Meherrin.
September 21, 1797. Flatty Creek (Newbiggin, now Salem), Pasquotank County.
September 20, 1798. Cashie, Bertie County.
October 5, 1799. Fishing Creek (New Meeting, Lawrence's), Halifax, Edgecombe County.
October 4, 1800. Falls of Tar, Nash County.
October 3, 1801. Great Swamp, Pitt County.
October 2, 1802. Wiccacon, Bertie County.
October 1, 1803. Connoho (Log Chapel), Martin County.
October 5, 1804. Meherrin, Hertford County.
October 4, 1805. Lower Fishing Creek, Halifax County.

In this period the following churches were received into the Association: 1794, Meherrin, Lemuel Burkitt, pastor; 1796, Great Swamp, Elder Noah Tison, pastor; 1798, Haywood's, Franklin County, under care of Elder Jacob Crocker; 1799. Quankey, Halifax County, no pastor but ministered to by Elders Jesse Read and McAlister Vinson; 1803, Cross Roads, Edgecombe County, Elder Jonathan Cherry, Pastor; Little Conetoe, same County, Elder Thomas Ross, pastor; Conaritsey, Bertie County, Elder Northam, pastor; 1804, Tranter's Creek, Beaufort County, pastor not given; Smithwick's Creek, Martin County, Joseph Biggs, pastor; Swift Creek, Edgecombe County, pastor not given; Prospect, Edgecombe County, pastor not given; Mearn's Chapel, Nash County, pastor not given; Sappony, Nash County, pastor not given; two churches in Bertie, one at Log Meeting House, the other at Outlaw's Chapel.

The years from 1790 till the end of the century were lean years for the churches in the Kehukee Association and the Baptist churches in eastern North Carolina generally. In fact there had been no great revival of religion since the formation of the Association. There had indeed been a steady growth as is shown by the increase in the number of churches and members, but in all the eastern half of the State there were hardly four thousand members of Baptist churches in 1800 in a population of perhaps 250,000. In other States there had been great revivals and ingatherings of members. In one Virginia Association, the Dover, the increase in membership from a great revival, 1785 to 1789, was said to be four or five thousand.[77] But little of this evangelical progress was felt in North Carolina. The records of the Kehukee Association show that the worthy men who assembled as its delegates from year to year were sensible of the coldness in religion and through long years were praying and devising means to bring on a revival. Burkitt and Read say:

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[77] *Rippon's Register,* I, 101. See also Semple, *Virginia Baptists,* 93f. Semple's statement is "many hundreds had been baptized in the course of the year." The correspondent of *Rippon's Register* gave the figures used in the text.

> As early as the year 1778 a revival was greatly desired, and a fast was proclaimed to humble ourselves before the Lord and to solicit the throne of grace for a revival. In 1785, at Shoulder's Hill, another fast was proclaimed. The same year, at an Association at Kehukee, it was agreed to set apart some time between sunset and dark every day, for all the churches to unite in prayer and earnestly pray for a revival. And in 1794, the Association agreed to appoint the Saturday before the fourth Sunday in every month a day of prayer meetings throughout the churches; whereon all the members of the respective churches were requested to meet at their meeting houses or places of worship, and there for each of them, as far as time would admit, to make earnest prayer and supplication to Almighty God for a revival of religion.[78]

But the religious coldness continued. The Baptist churches of the Kehukee Association were not making the appeal that won numerous converts. The number of baptisms reported by the churches to the Association from year to year was small. In 1799 it was 15; in 1790, probably because the Virginia churches of the Association had felt the influence of the revival in the Dover Association, the number rose to 446; after that the figures year by year from 1791 to 1801 inclusive are 99, 192, 00, 57, 19, 33, 13, 43, 72, 129, 138. Some of the older members had died; others had moved to the west; still others had left the churches of their own will, verifying the Scripture, "that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Owing to these things the membership of the churches was reduced greatly, "so that in some churches there were hardly enough members to hold conference, and in some other churches the Lord's Supper was seldom administered."[79]

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[78] *Kehukee Association,* 139. The first session of the Neuse Association, that of 1794, met at Bear Marsh church, Rev. Francis Oliver pastor, October, 1794, and "agreed to join the Kehukee in a public fast on the second Monday in November, and in their prayer meeting on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday in every month." *Rippon's Register,* II, 204. This action was doubtless taken on the instance of Elder Lemuel Burkitt who was a visitor.

It may be asked to what this decline was due. The Association and the churches seemed to think it partly due to lack of ministers. The young men for one reason or another were not entering the ministry. We have seen that Mr. J. W. Moore supposed that this was due to the attention given to politics by the young men, and the fostering of the atheistic spirit by the numerous debating clubs. Rev. John Leland, in his *Virginia Chronicle*,[80] suggests that possibly the old preachers stood in the way; or possibly the people did not pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; or possibly it was a judgment of God upon the people for neglecting the proper support of the ministers. But whatever the cause very few young men of ability were entering the ministry of the Baptist churches of eastern North Carolina at this time. This in itself is a sufficient reason for the coldness in religion among these people. For no church that fails to enlist the interest of its best young people can resist decay.

Another cause of the decreasing number of converts in the Baptist churches was doubtless the character of the preaching, which tended to conform to the hyper-Calvinistic principles to which all churches admitted to the Association were required to subscribe and which continued to receive new assertion by the Association and were ordered printed as late as 1799.[81]

We must beware, however, of too severe censure of those who were now coloring all their sermons with Calvinistic doctrines. They had been led to believe that the poor state of religion in eastern North Carolina was due to Arminianism and that Arminians were only less abhorrent than Universalists. Both are named together by the gentle Burkitt as agents of the enemy of souls in sowing seeds of discord among the faithful and when occasion offered like wild beasts ready "to look out of their dens, where they had been driven by the refulgent beams of gospel truth."[82]

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[79] *Kehukee Association*, 138.
[80] Quoted in Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, 38.
[81] *Kehukee Association*, 48.

The unkind judgment just mentioned cannot be justified but it can be explained by a consideration of the religious conditions of the time in North Carolina. The Established church had failed. The scandals connected with the names of Brett, Gerrard, Urmstone, Blacknall, Boyd, and Barnwell were not forgotten. They had been notorious for their drunkenness and worldliness. Many others were loose livers. Rev. Daniel Earl, pastor at Edenton for many years, immediately preceding the Revolution, was charged by his fellow ministers with revolting covetousness in exacting exorbitant fees for administering the sacrament to the sick and for baptisms,[83] and seems to have given attention to a herring fishery to the neglect of the morals of his parishioners, a charge brought against him in some doggerel verse on a paper nailed to the door of the Edenton church.[84] And "like priest, like people." The young men just coming to manhood found little in the precepts of the church or the example of its members to help them live lives of soberness and reverence. Those who like Silas Mercer had been blessed with pious parents and had escaped the grosser sins of youth looked in vain to the church to help them in the building of Christian homes and the rearing of their children. They were struck with dismay as they saw men most notorious for immorality and foul sins undisciplined by the church and admitted to the sacred communion of the

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[82] *Ibid.*, 213.

[83] *Colonial Records*, IX, 21f. Letter of Rev. C. E. Taylor.

[84] "A very fine church
And a very tall steeple,
A herring-catching parson
And a wicked set of people."

Lord's Supper.[85] In some sections none seemed to care for his soul's concern and even the small children were well trained in vice.[86] These deplorable conditions in church and society were, whether wrongly or rightly, attributed by the exponents of Calvinism to the Arminian teachings and practice of the Establishment.[87]

It was chiefly because the General Baptists were professed Arminians that the Particular Baptists believed the members of their churches unregenerate, and magnified the looseness of their discipline. What if the General Baptists had preached repentance and insisted upon believers' baptism? They lacked the one thing needful; even some of those who were preaching and administering the ordinance of baptism were not themselves converted; their churches were full of the unconverted who had been attracted by the proclamation that any son of Adam may become a Christian and an heir of salvation who will come to Jesus and accept him as personal Saviour; of course, on such an invitation all the world would become Christian, for everybody desires to escape the wrath to come. Thus these General Baptist preachers had been preaching pernicious heresy in the eyes of those who believed that only the elect are saved and were convinced that God did not gather his elect under the preaching of the heralds of a General Provision. All would now agree with Hufham that such a judgment is unjust in the extreme "to the men who first preached Baptist doctrines in North Carolina, and laid the foundations of the strength and prosperity which have since come to the denomination in every part of the State."[88] But Burkitt and his followers were blind to this fact and in their revulsion to Arminianism became the more pronounced in their Calvinism. They would not see that Arminians as well as Calvinists believed that salvation is the gift of God which no mortal merits; that from the churches should be excluded the thoughtless, the sinful and the wicked; that to the churches should be admitted the regenerate alone who manifested a serious purpose to walk as becometh saints, in helpful fellowship and holy communion. The Calvinists believed that it was only the preaching of Calvinism that produced such churches and that Arminianism was responsible for the demoralization which they saw around them. Under the impulse of such a conviction they preached a severer gospel than had been heard before in their section: broad is the way that leads to death and many walk therein, while the way of life is strait and few there be that find it; not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall be saved. All this was most wholesome doctrine at a time when so many had no just conception of the sanctity and obligations of the Christian life and lightly assumed the Christian name. And that the preaching of the Calvinists resulted in a higher type of Christianity than had be-

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[85] Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, 358.

[86] *Kehukee Association*, 192. Burkitt in speaking of the section around Ballard's Bridge says, "The small children were so well trained up in vice, that a small boy about nine or ten years of age had a pack of cards, and was challenging the whole company to play."

[87] Benedict, *Op. cit.*, II, 358.

[88] *N. C. Baptist Historical Papers*, III, 223. I can not agree, however, with Hufham in his contention that the General Baptists were not Arminians. In general I agree with Whitsett, *N. C. Baptist Historical*

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*Papers,* II, 50, that one of the chief weaknesses of Dr. Hufham's writings on North Carolina Baptist history was his minimizing the difference between General and Particular Baptists. I quote a paragraph of Whitsett's letter to Hufham on the subject: "Have you not committed a blunder in minimizing the difference between the General and the Particular Baptists? They were poles apart in the period of which you treat; much further apart than at present is the case. The difference between them was the leading item of the Baptist situation and General Baptists dominated in America from 1639 to 1740. If that fact should be overlooked, North Carolina Baptist history would be an insoluble riddle. The overthrow of the General Baptists of North Carolina by John Gano, P. P. Van Horn and others from Philadelphia Association furnishes a landmark that must abide for ages. I am a Particular Baptist throughout, but I have sometimes been moved to tears by the sad fate of Paul Palmer, when his flourishing field—the most prosperous body of Baptist people at that time in the world —was overrun and trampled down by his enemies. Paul Palmer excites my imagination and evokes my sympathy. He was a great and worthy man, and ought to have a monument somewhere in North Carolina. His sign manual is still found on the Baptists of the State: they can never escape from him."

fore existed in eastern North Carolina is a simple historical fact.

But in their aversion to Arminianism Burkitt and his fellow Baptists in the Kehukee Association went to the other extreme and got entangled in the subtleties of Predestination and God's foreknowledge. It is strange what a fascination this doctrine so briefly stated in the eighth chapter of Romans has had on men of the greatest intellects such as Augustine, Calvin and Jonathan Edwards; and yet, after all they have said, it still remains, like the question of man's free will, one of the things without satisfactory explanation —a mystery. As commonly stated there is no resisting the fatalistic logic that if God has foreknown all things the eternal course of events is fixed beyond the possibility of a change. Applying this logic to religion, Calvinists like Burkitt insisted that God before the foundation of the world had elected particular persons to be saved and that it was utterly impossible that such should not be saved, while it was equally impossible for those whom God had not so elected to be saved.

Wherever preaching is consistently colored with such Calvinism as that outlined above it loses its evangelical character and appeal, its ministers lose their missionary impulse and gather few new churches. Accordingly we are not to be surprised that the churches of the Kehukee Association made no large gains so long as they remained hyper-Calvinistic.

It is to be observed that in Virginia the status of Calvinism was somewhat different among the Baptists. There the great majority of ministers indeed accepted Calvinism, but among them was a respectable minority who openly declared against it, some of them the ablest and most popular preachers, such as Jeremiah Walker, who continued an Arminian to the end of his days. Furthermore, in the union of the Separates and Regulars in Virginia in 1787, the Separates accepted the Philadelphia Confession only partly and conditionally, and when the Regulars suggested as a condition of union that the Separates should exclude professed Arminians from their churches the Association had replied:

> That if there were some among them who leaned too much towards the Arminian system, they were generally men of exemplary piety, and great usefulness in the Redeemer's kingdom; and they conceived it better to bear with some diversity of opinion in doctrines, than to break with men whose Christian deportment rendered them amiable in the estimation of all true lovers of godliness. Indeed, that some of them had now become fathers in the gospel, who previous to the bias which their minds had received, had borne the brunt and heat of persecution, whose laborings and sufferings God had blessed, and still blessed, to the great advancement of his cause; to exclude such as these from their communion, would be like tearing limbs from the body.[89]

In the Kehukee Association, however, especially after the separation from the Virginia churches, there was no such Christian liberality of sentiment. Arminianism was a doctrine almost accursed, even the mention of whose name was almost anathema. On this account one looks in vain for any account of the work of the General Baptists in the work of Burkitt and Read. The preachers were restricted both in thought and preaching by the bands of Calvinism not one whit more liberal than that held by the Primitive Baptist churches of the present day. It is hard to find any other explanation why for so many years the Baptists had no church in Gates County, only one in Hertford, the General Baptist church of Meherrin, and only one in Northampton, that of Potecasi, built largely of members won from the Meherrin church. Furthermore, it is probable that the Calvinism of the leaders of the Baptists at this time was considerably strengthened in reaction against the Arminian preaching of the Methodists who had now become numerous and aggressive in North Carolina. Methodists are hardly mentioned by Burkitt and Read, but as the spread of their church and doctrine has rivaled that of the Baptists in North Carolina and so profoundly influenced it, I find it necessary to give some account, if only in outline, of their rise and early progress in North Carolina.

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[89] Semple, *Virginia Baptists*, 74f.

Let it be understood, first of all, that until 1784 the Methodist leaders were members of the Church of England, and had received Episcopal ordination from some bishop of that church. It was only with much reluctance that Wesley in England and Asbury in America consented to the formation of a separate church. Until its formation the converts made and baptized by the so-called Methodist preachers were regarded as members of the Church of England, and the Methodist societies were regarded loosely as societies in the pale of that church. The ordained ministers among them had free access to the chapels of the Establishment and on this account gained a more ready hearing among adherents of the Episcopal church. Thus the early Methodists were a peculiar type of Episcopalians, a fact which is recognized in the very name Methodist Episcopal Church. The characteristic of the Methodist minister was his evangelistic preaching. He cried aloud against the sins of the people and called on men everywhere to repent, insisting that religion was a personal experience. There was something of that quality in the preaching of George Whitefield whose followers were sometimes called Methodists but never in North Carolina were formed into societies. Another minister of the Church of England whose preaching was much like that of the later Methodists was Rev. D. Jarratt, who in 1763 began to labor in the vicinity of Petersburg, Virginia. A revival under his preaching began in 1770 and continued for two years spreading as far as the Roanoke in North Carolina. His work is spoken of in a letter of Rev. C. E. Taylor, written from Northampton County in 1774, who says:

> We have a certain Mr. Devereux Jarrat, Minister in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, who travels about into every parish he thinks proper, in Carolina as well as Virginia, laying aside the service of the Church and making use of extempore prayers and discourses, preaching up free grace, faith without works and other doctrines, very detrimental to a great many weak but well disposed people.[90]

It was from this source in all probability that the first societies of Methodists arose in North Carolina. They were to be found in the counties of Halifax, and Bute (Warren). The work in North Carolina was done largely by one of Mr. Jarratt's fellow laborers named Robert Williams, who in 1774 organized a society in Halifax. According to the Methodist historian as a result of this revival the North Carolina Conference was formed and reported 683 members at the Baltimore conference in 1776.[91] The next year the Carolina conference had 930 members. Its preachers were Edward Dromgoole, Francis Poythress, and Isham Tatum, who were succeeded the next year by John King, John Dickens, Lee Roy Cole, and Edward Pride. These men were itinerant preachers rather than pastors and went from place to place preaching and gathering societies, penetrating a great portion of the State and laying the foundations of Methodism. But it must be understood that until after 1784 they "had no authority but to spread the gospel. They were not ordained, and hence not empowered to administer the sacraments. . . . Those who belonged to the societies went to the different churches for the sacraments," baptism and the Lord's Supper.

There were already four circuits in 1780 in North Carolina, that is, circuits of societies not of churches. After the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 Methodism assumes a new character. Its ministers were now ordained and had the right to perform the ordinances.

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[90] *Colonial Records,* IX, 1,003.

[91] Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina,* I, 48. From this excellent work I have taken the most of the other facts given in my outline.

In accord with Wesley's advice it had a regular Episcopal organization with bishops, elders and deacons. It had churches rather than societies. There were annual conferences to which the various ministers from all the States were required to report and at which the bishops made appointments for the next year. The first of these convened on April 20, 1785, at the house of Green Hill, one mile south of Louisburg, North Carolina, which was the place of its meeting several times in the next ten years.

After 1784 Methodism had a remarkable growth in North Carolina. The following paragraphs from Grissom's history will indicate something of its extent and numbers, in 1800, first in the entire State, and then in the region of the Kehukee Association with which we are just now interested:

> In 1800 Francis Poythress was appointed presiding elder on a district embracing the following charges, extending from Asheville to Cape Hatteras, and from Wilmington to the Virginia line: Morganton and Swanannoa, Yadkin, Salisbury, Haw River, Guilford, Franklin, Caswell, Tar River, New Bern, Goshen, Wilmington, Contentney, Pamlico, Roanoke, and Mattamuskeet and Banks. On this district there was a membership of 4,421 whites and 1,253 colored.
>
> In 1780 the Roanoke Circuit was the only charge in all this territory (eastern North Carolina). That year it had a membership of 480. In 1790 this territory had four circuits—Camden, Bertie, Roanoke, and New River—with a membership of 3,072 whites and 1,220 colored. During this decade we see a most wonderful growth. During the next ten years, from 1790 to 1800, the circuits were so divided that the number was doubled, giving the following circuits in 1800: Roanoke, Pamlico, New Bern, Goshen, Contentney, Camden, Bertie, and Banks and Mattamuskeet. But while the number of circuits had increased and the people were better served, yet from some cause the membership dropped from 3,072 whites in 1790 to 2,073 in 1800.

If we will follow Bishop Asbury in one of his many journeys through the State we can form some idea of what places were probably the more important Methodist centers. About the middle of February, 1801, he entered the State near the sea and preached at Gause's Manor, near the South Carolina line. He then preached at three or four places, Shallotte, Lockwood's Folly, Town Creek. On Wednesday, February 25 he dined at General Smith's, near Wilmington, where there was abundance and hospitality, and the next day was in the town, where the Methodists had a tabernacle, at which he preached several times to large congregations. On Friday he continued his journey north, preaching at Nixon, and then on to New River, where on Sunday, March 1, he had a very serious but unaffected congregation. On the next day he came to the Trent where he preached at Frederic Argate's the funeral of his mother, the respected wife of General Frederick Argate, whose almost uninterrupted occupation had been "to relieve the poor and solace the afflicted." On Tuesday, March 4, he preached at Jones courthouse to "many women, but few men." After several other sermons in this region he came to New Bern and on Sunday, March 8, had a sacrament. On Monday he rode thirty-seven miles to Washington, where he and his company were received "as angels of God" by Ralph Potts, a native of England, who was building a chapel at his own expense. Then they made their way to Tarboro, preaching several times on the way, and held services at Toole's meeting house near the town. The next day they were fifteen miles distant at Prospect Chapel—"open to all societies." On the next day they were fourteen miles further on at Henry Bradford's, on Fishing Creek in Halifax County. "O, the awful state of religion in this circuit!" ejaculates Asbury. From this place he hurried on through Northampton, crossing the Roanoke at Pollock's Ferry, and the Chowan at Winton, and on to Gates Courthouse, where he preached on Wednesday, March 18. Then he went on through Gates, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck, preaching at many places, at one of which there were only "five souls of whites," while another was "a most awful place," at which Satan triumphs. Thus through drenching rains, sick in body, and suffering terribly during the last ten days, he came Tuesday, March 24, to his last appointment in North Carolina, Currituck Courthouse, and passed on to Virginia.

It is no prosperous condition of religion that Asbury pictures in North Carolina at the time. Our present interest, however, is the fact that his itinerary reveals that the Methodists were for the most part occupying the places which the Baptists had left unevangelized. They were in the towns and in Northampton and Gates. Up to this time the Baptist churches had not yet caught that missionary spirit that later characterized the Chowan Association; for lack of it no young men were fired with a zeal to carry the gospel to others, even to their nearest neighbors and to destitute sections in adjacent counties. And why, according to the theology in which they were instructed by their ministers, should they concern themselves? If God had any elect in Northampton or Gates in his own good time he would, to use Dr. Ryland's phrase to Carey, "convert them without your help or mine." But as we have seen, the people and churches were praying for a revival of religion, and the revival came.

The people of North Carolina have always been essentially a religious people. Such they were at the close of the eighteenth century. Though few of them at this time were in the churches no system of theology could long keep them from seeking reconciliation with God. Only a way and opportunity needed to be provided, and they would burst the barriers that had kept them in seeming irreligion. And God in his compassion provided the way. This came at the time of the Great Revival. And it came to the Kehukee Association as elsewhere. But it came to this Association only as a part of a general revival that arising in Kentucky spread through all the States south of the Potomac and Ohio. And of that general movement it is now necessary to say a word.

It seems a sense of coldness in religion had at this time overspread the churches of most of the Southern States. As early as 1794 the Charleston Association was praying for a revival. Its plan was to have a general concert of prayer which should include all denominations, to implore God "for the revival of religion among Christians; the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, and the conversion of Jews to Christianity." But the coldness continued.[92] The closing words of the address put forth at that time reveal something of the seriousness of the situation: "Rouse, brethren, from your lethargy; reason, interest, obligation call; judgments threaten; mercies invite; all that is sacred to the heart of a rational immortal creature requires your activity, seriousness, and diligence in the cause of your God and your Redeemer. Render to Jehovah his unquestionable and too long detained due, and prove him herewith, if he will not pour you out a blessing, that there even shall not be room to receive it."[93]

With so many saints all over this section pouring out their hearts to God for a revival, it was sure to come. It was in the Elkhorn Association of Kentucky that it first appeared in proportions to attract attention. The churches in that Association also had been under a sense of religious depression. At its session in August, 1799, it seemed "as if every harp was untuned and hung on a willow tree." But at the Association of 1800 all was changed. The letters of the churches showed that all were expecting a divine visitation. After a meeting which, though attended with much seriousness, was lively and refreshing, the delegates departed for their homes, in some cases leaving as many as a dozen persons in the houses where they had lodged bathed in tears. Thus the revival begun, and soon had spread over all the region south of the Kentucky River, affecting the frontier settlements in Mississippi no less than the long settled Atlantic seaboard.[94] In almost every Kentucky church of every denomination there were many accessions; in a few months 353 were baptized at the New Crossing church, and 358 in the church at Bryan's Station. From here it spread into Tennessee and North Carolina and all over the South. Of the excesses and extravagances of this great religious movement, which so much scandalized the good Dr. Rippon,[95] this is no place to speak, except to say that general approval is now and has long been given the view that the direct good obtained from the Great Revival more than counterbalanced any incidental evils, a view expressed at the time as a confident hope by Dr. Richard Furman.[96]

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[92] Benedict, *History of the Baptists,* II, 143f.
[93] Benedict, *History of Baptists,* II, 144.

One may perhaps be better able to follow the story of this revival in the Kehukee Association if he has first had some account of it in the central portion of the State and in the Sandy Creek Association. Before it had reached North Carolina the revival had gained the support of other denominations than the Baptists, but especially of the Presbyterians and Methodists. A writer in the *Georgia Baptist Repository*[97] says that it started in North Carolina in Guilford, under the preaching of a Presbyterian minister, and soon uniting all denominations extended as far as Raft Swamp, southwest of Fayetteville. At places in the counties of Guilford, Chatham, Orange, Rowan, Montgomery and Moore, the people would assemble to the number of two or three thousand in camp meetings. Religion attracted the attention of every one and became the general topic of conversation, except of a few who wished to be thought more rational than their neighbors. But that there had been a great reformation of manners was incontrovertible.

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[94] Letter in *Rippon's Register,* IV, 1007ff., 697.

[95] *Register,* IV, 1010.

[96] *Rippon's Register,* IV, 1105.

[97] Internal evidence indicates that the writer was probably Dr. David Caldwell. It is found on pages 105f., and dated August 17, 1802.

In the Sandy Creek Association, according to Benedict,[98] there had been since the days of Stearns two very comfortable and extensive revivals. But by the close of the eighteenth century, because of deaths and removals, the Association was very much reduced. (According to Asplund its churches in 1793 contained 970 members.) The ministers had become few, and the churches languid and small. But towards the close of 1800 the Great Revival made a sudden and unexpected entrance among them, with the most of its usual characteristics. The Presbyterians and Methodists were soon united in communion and in camp meetings. The Baptists though strongly solicited did not join with these denominations either in their camp meetings or in their communion scheme, which involved for the other denominations no surrender of principle but did require a surrender of the cherished Baptist tenet of believers' baptism as a prerequisite for communion. But individual Baptists felt free to attend the camp meetings of the other denominations and the Baptists also had camp meetings of their own. The Baptist ministers and their people being much tried in mind and at first standing aloof soon discovered in the rapid and powerful spread of the revival evident marks of a genuine work of grace, and they, too, cordially and zealously engaged in forwarding and promoting it. The remainder of the account may be given in the words of Benedict, as related to him by Rev. George Pope, minister of the church of Abbott's Creek, "a man of sense and moderation."

> In the progress of the revival among the Baptists, and especially at their camp meetings, there were exhibited scenes of the most solemn and affecting nature; and in many instances there was heard at the same time, throughout the vast congregation, a mingled sound of prayer, exhortation, groans and praise. The fantastic exercise of jerking, dancing, &c. in a religious way prevailed much with the united body of Methodists and Presbyterians towards the close of the revival; but they were not introduced at all among the

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[98] *History of the Baptists,* Vol. II, 108f.

Baptists in these parts. But falling down among religious impressions was frequent among them. Many were taken with these religious epilepsies, if we may so call them, not only at the great meetings where those scenes were exhibited which were calculated to move the sympathetic affections, but also about their daily employments, some in the fields, some in their houses, and some when hunting their cattle in the woods. And in some cases people were thus strangely affected when alone; so that if some played the hypocrite with others the exercise must have been involuntary and unaffected. And besides falling down there were many other expressions of zeal, which in more moderate people would be considered enthusiastic and wild.

Mr. Pope in the course of the revival baptized about 500 persons. Large numbers were also baptized by John Culpepper (of Anson County) and William McGregor (of Montgomery County).

We now return to the Kehukee Association and the work of Lemuel Burkitt in bringing the Great Revival to its churches. This was the culmination of all the great services of Burkitt. It transformed him; it did no little to give the people that evangelical zeal and missionary spirit which prepared them for coöperative work in missionary societies and the Baptist State Convention.

When Burkitt heard, perhaps from Rev. David Barrow, the good news of the revival in Kentucky he set out on the long journey to that State to learn if the reports were true. Though he was already past fifty years of age, yet he was of wiry and tough frame. Probably for the first time in his life leaving the plains of the Atlantic slope he climbed the majestic mountains which lay in his way to Kentucky. When he arrived the Revival was going on with unabated progress. Seeing the wonderful works of grace "his soul caught the seraphic flame. He preached almost night and day for several weeks in those States with great acceptance, then returned home fired with an ardent zeal surpassing any thing" his friends had before seen.[99] Returning for the meeting of the Kehukee Association at Great Swamp in 1801, Burkitt proclaimed from the stage that in eight months about six thousand had been converted and baptized in Kentucky, and the work was still going on. The people heard this news with much emotion, and many began to cry out for mercy and many others fell to praising and glorifying God. Such a Kehukee Association had never before been seen. "The ministers all seemed alive in the work of the Lord, and every Christian present in rapturous desire was ready to cry, 'Thy Kingdom come.' The ministers and delegates carried the sacred flame home to their churches, and the fire began to kindle . . . and the work increased."[100]

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[99] Sketch in church book of Sandy Run church, published by Pittman, in *Wake Forest Student* for October, 1905.

Since it is the purpose of a religious history to transmit to readers not only the facts but some appreciation of the emotions and spiritual affections of the people at the various periods which it discusses, I am giving here somewhat abridged Burkitt's rhapsodical account of the revival.

> The first appearance that was discovered was, great numbers of people attended the ministry of the word, and the congregations kept increasing. It was observed in some places that as many people would now meet at a meeting on a common day as used to meet on Sunday, and as many would come on Sundays as used to attend at great meetings. And it was also observed that the audience was more solemn and serious than usual. . . . The word preached was attended with such a divine power that at some meetings two or three hundred would be in floods of tears, and many crying out loudly, *What shall we do to be saved?* Another thing was observed, old Christians were so revived they were all on fire to see their neighbors, their neighbors' children and their own families so much engaged. Their souls seemed melted down in love, and their strength renewed like the eagles. Many backsliders who had been run away for many years returned weeping home. The ministers seemed all united in love, and no strife or contention amongst them. . . . The work increasing, many were converted and they began to join the churches. Some churches, which had not received a member by baptism for a year or two, would now frequently receive, at almost every conference meeting, several members, sometimes 12, 14, 18, 20, and 24 at several times in one day. As many as twenty-two and twenty-four were baptized

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[100] *Kehukee Association*, 140f.

several times at Flat Swamp, Cashie, Parker's meeting house (Meherrin), Fishing Creek, Falls of Tar River &c. Some of the churches in the revival received nearly 200 members each. In four churches lying between Roanoke and Meherrin Rivers, in Bertie, Northampton and Hertford counties, were baptized in two years about 600 members; and blessed be God the work seems yet (1803) progressing. . . . According to the accounts returned to the two last Associations 1,500 have been added to the churches by baptism in the Kehukee Association.

The Lord was pleased to make use of weak and simple means to effect great purposes, that it might be manifest that the work was His and not man's. *Singing* was attended with a great blessing. Elder Burkitt published two or three different pamphlets, each containing a small collection of spiritual songs, some of which he had brought from the western countries. They were in great demand; as many as 6,000 were disposed of in two years. We might truly say, *The time of singing of birds had come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land.* At every meeting, before the minister began to preach, the congregation was melodiously entertained with numbers singing delightfully, while all the congregation seemed in lively exercises. Nothing seemed to engage the attention of the people more; and the children and servants at every house were singing these melodious songs. . . . *Shaking hands* while singing was a means (though simple in itself) to further the work. The ministers used frequently, at the close of worship, to sing a spiritual song suited to the occasion, and go through the congregation, and shake hands with the people while singing. . . . The act seemed so friendly, the ministers so loving, that the party with whom the minister shook hands would often be melted to tears.

*Giving the people an invitation to come up and be prayed for* was also blessed. The ministers, usually at the close of preaching, would tell the congregation, that if there were any persons who felt themselves lost and condemned under the guilt and burden of their sins, if they would come near the stage and kneel down they would pray for them. Shame at first kept many back, but as the work increased, numbers apparently under strong conviction would come and fall down before the Lord at the feet of the ministers and crave an interest in their prayers, sometimes twenty or thirty at a time. And at some Union Meetings two or three hundred would come, and try to come as near as they could. . . . It had a powerful effect on the spectators to see their wives, husbands, children, neighbors so solicitous for the salvation of their souls; and this was sometimes a means of their conviction.

*Relating experiences, and the administration of the ordinance of* *baptism* were greatly blessed in this revival. When the churches held conferences to receive members the congregations would draw up in such crowds as they would tread one on another, anxious to hear the experiences of their neighbors and families. And while the candidates were relating their experinces, the audience would be in flood of tears, and some almost convulsed, while their children, companions and friends were relating their conversion. Several declared this was the means of their conviction.

And when the ordinance of baptism was administered, nothing had a more solemn effect. . . . To see fifteen or twenty persons suitably attired, to go in the water, in a row, hand in hand and the minister at the head, march down into the water regularly, like soldiers of Jesus, singing as they went . . . would make a solemn effect on the numerous assembly. Numbers would be in floods of tears, and so greatly affected (they) could hardly stand while they would express their sincere wishes that they were prepared to go in with their children and companions. Sometimes they had the pleasure to see the father and the son, the mother and her daughter, the wife and the husband, go into the water together hand in hand.

*Evening meetings* were greatly blessed. Some years past it was customary to hold night meetings, but for some time they were disused. When the revival commenced they began to revive. In some neighborhoods they met once a week on an evening, and numbers would attend. Sometimes and in some places nearly 200 people would meet, and some people would come ten miles to a night meeting. . . .

*Union Meetings* have also been attended with a blessing. An Union Meeting consists of several churches, being convenient to one other and of the same faith and order, who meet at stated times to confer in love about matters relating to peace, brotherly union and general fellowship. The time the meeting holds is usually three days. On the first day one of the ministers delivers a suitable sermon introductory to business; then all the brethren present from every church, who are in fellowship, sit in conference, and any brother is at liberty to propose such cases of conscience as he wants advice on; or any difficult passage of scripture on which he wants light; or anything else which tends to the harmony of the churches or to love and peace amongst the brethren. And when the conference adjourns the rest of the time is employed in preaching, praying, singing, &c.

These Union Meetings were attended with a very great blessing. At some of them three or four thousand people would meet, and sometimes fifteen or sixteen ministers attend. Great numbers were solemnly affected and at times, we have reason to believe, many got converted.

At the Union Meeting at Parker's meeting house (Meherrin), August, 1803, it is supposed 4,000 people were present. The weather proved very rainy on Sunday. There was a stage erected in the meeting house yard; and at about half after 11 o'clock, Elder Burkitt ascended the stage to preach. It was expected from the appearance of the clouds it would rain every moment, and before he was done preaching it did so. Yet notwithstanding the numerous congregation still kept together; and although every effort was used to shun the rain, by umbrellas, carriages, blankets, &c., yet we believe 1,000 people were exposed to the rain without any shelter, some crying, some convulsed on the ground, some begging the ministers to pray for them; and they composedly stood and received the falling shower without ever being dispersed.

And it is not only at particular times, but blessed be God, these meetings are generally blessed. O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men! We feel ourselves very happy and thankful at this time for the visitation of the Lord. O, that he would continue his work until the whole world is brought into subjection to the peaceful reign of Christ, the Prince of Peace; that the whole earth may be filled with his glory, and his knowledge cover the earth as the waters the sea![101]

With this account of the Great Revival Burkitt and Read close their story of the Kehukee Association. The Primitive Baptist historians of that body[102] are careful to insist that in that revival too much reliance was at times placed upon human means for the conversion of sinners, and that the zeal manifested was not "according to knowledge, not according to the New Testament, neither according to the practice of the churches composing the Kehukee Association from its origin up to this period."[103] And indeed the statement that it was not in accord with the practice of the churches of the Kehukee Association is correct. The methods used in that revival cannot be reconciled with the statement of principles on which churches were admitted to the Kehukee Association.

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[101] *Kehukee Association*, 138ff.

[102] Elders C. B. Hassell and Sylvester Hassell, *Church History*.

[103] *Church History*, 717.

The fact is that with this revival a new day had begun with those churches of the Kehukee Association which in 1805 were to withdraw to form the Chowan Association. They were no longer bound by an effete ecclesiasticism but had the freedom of the sons of God, and were ready to use such talents and means as they had for the spread of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world. Henceforth the Baptists of the Chowan section were to be missionary Baptists and have an educated ministry. It was the Great Revival that prepared the churches for this forward step. This is recognized and admitted by the Primitive Baptist historians. They however, look upon it, not as an advantage growing out of the revival, but as one of its drawbacks. But for the revival, so called, they say, this great departure from the custom of the fathers would have received no favor from the Association, but it was when the zeal and the credulity of the many hundreds of new converts was at its height that the new departure was begun and first received the sanction of the Association.[104]

The Baptists of the Chowan region and of several other sections of North Carolina now needed only a leader, and it was found that a leader was already among them. This was Elder Martin Ross. He himself had long walked in the light. Now the Lord had made his people a willing people. The man and the occasion had met. At the meeting of the Association at Connoho Log Chapel in Martin County, October, 1803, he brought forward his famous missionary query:

> Is not the Kehukee Association, with all her numerous and respectable friends, called on in Providence, in some way to step forward in support of that missionary spirit which the great God is so wonderfully reviving amongst the different denominations of good men in various parts of the world?

Doubtless Martin Ross had been reading *Rippon's Register*, of which, as will be recalled the Association had subscribed for fifty copies at its session in 1791. So much a good paper does for the advancement of religion. In that periodical had been appearing letters from missionaries in India, Carey, Powell, and Fountain, some of them addressed to Baptist ministers of America, telling of the great things the Lord was doing in that first of Baptist missions. But the pages of that periodical revealed the fact that the Baptists were not alone in their missionary undertakings, that other denominations too had their missionaries in various parts of the world telling the good tidings of salvation. Their accounts, read today, stir the emotions and quicken one's sympathy for the lost peoples among whom they were laboring; they also excite admiration for the heroic efforts of the missionaries and make the reader desire to have some part in them. Martin Ross read them and became a Christian cosmopolitan. With this in mind one can understand his great query. In his query Ross called attention to the revival of missionary spirit among men of all denominations in various parts of the world. The English Baptists in 1793 had formed the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen and sent Carey and Thomas to India. Soon after a wave of missionary enthusiasm swept over certain Baptist Associations of the United States. Before the end of the century the New York Association had formed the New York Missionary Society which was supporting missionaries among the Indians. In January, 1798, the Philadelphia Association, as a result of much discussion of missions, established the Philadelphia Missionary Society, which was also actively engaged in work among the Indians, but whose promoters included heathen nations as well in their purposes.[105] The Philadelphia Association had also begun a correspondence with Baptists of other States looking to cooperation in missionary work. At the Charleston Association which met at Deep Creek, November, 1800, a query was introduced to the same purport as that of Ross and nearly in the language he used in his query at Connoho.[106] Ross had caught the missionary spirit which was then reviving among other enlightened Baptists. He did not originate the movement in America; it is sufficient honor that he led his brethren in North Carolina to a sense of their duty to carry or send the gospel to those who had it not.[107]

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[104] Hassell, *Church History,* 721.

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[105] *Rippon's Register*, III, 373, 537. *History of the Philadelphia Baptist Association.*

In this query Ross had sounded the first trumpet call of North Carolina Baptists to the work of missions. Its immediate effect was disturbing to those who, like Martin Luther and Christians of his day, had been content to believe that the Great Commission applied only to Christians of the Apostolic age. It sent not peace upon the Baptists of the Kehukee Association but a sword. It called upon those who favored missions to step forward and support them with their means. For the Kehukee Association did not, like the Charleston Association in answer to a similar query, advise first to give the gospel to those who had long heard it proclaimed. The purpose of Ross was to evangelize the heathen whether in America or elsewhere. Hence his query caused trouble. According to the Primitive Baptist historians,[108] "it gave rise to contentions, heartburnings, bickerings, animosities, and strife, broke the peace of the brethren, and was a fire brand in their midst." Thereafter Missionary and Anti-Missionary were to be the characterizing terms of those who followed and of those who refused to follow Ross.

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[106] *Rippon's Register*, III, 524.

[107] Hufham, *Baptist Historical Papers*, II, 224, says, "The Kehukee Association, under the lead of Martin Ross, was the first body of the kind in the United States to take official action in behalf of missions to the heathen and to formulate permanent plans for the support of the enterprise." I have found nothing in such records as have come to my hand to justify this extravagant claim. No minutes of the Cashie meeting have been preserved, and it would be wonderful if the Philanthropic Missionary Society had formed permanent plans for "promoting the cause of foreign missions." The Baptist State Convention on its formation was not quite sure about foreign missions, and as we have seen other Associations were already engaged in missionary work several years before 1803.

[108] Hassell, *Church History*, 721.

The query, under the rules, lying over a year, came up for decision at the next Association, in 1804, and received a fitting answer. The Association decided "to support the missionary cause." To that end it appointed a committee, consisting of Elders Lemuel Burkitt, Martin Ross, Aaron Spivey, Jesse Read and John McCabe, to meet such delegates as might be appointed by the Virginia Portsmouth and Neuse Associations at Cashie meeting house, Bertie County, on Friday before the third Sunday in June, 1805, to devise ways and means for missionary support. Elder Martin Ross was appointed to deliver the introductory sermon on that occasion. "Thus," say the Primitive Baptist historians,[109] "Elder Ross had gotten his bantling born, and Cashie seemed to be the cradle in which to nurse it."

Regrettably no record of the Cashie meeting has been preserved. We only know that arrangements were made to get contributions from the churches for missions, and for this purpose was organized the Baptist Philanthropic Society. Thus was begun the first organized missionary work among North Carolina Baptists. It was to grow and expand under the untiring care of Ross until twenty-five years later it became the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. But that great story must be left for another volume. The division of the Association at this time, by which the churches north of the Roanoke became the Chowan Associaton, gave Ross and his compeers greater freedom in carrying forward their noble purposes.

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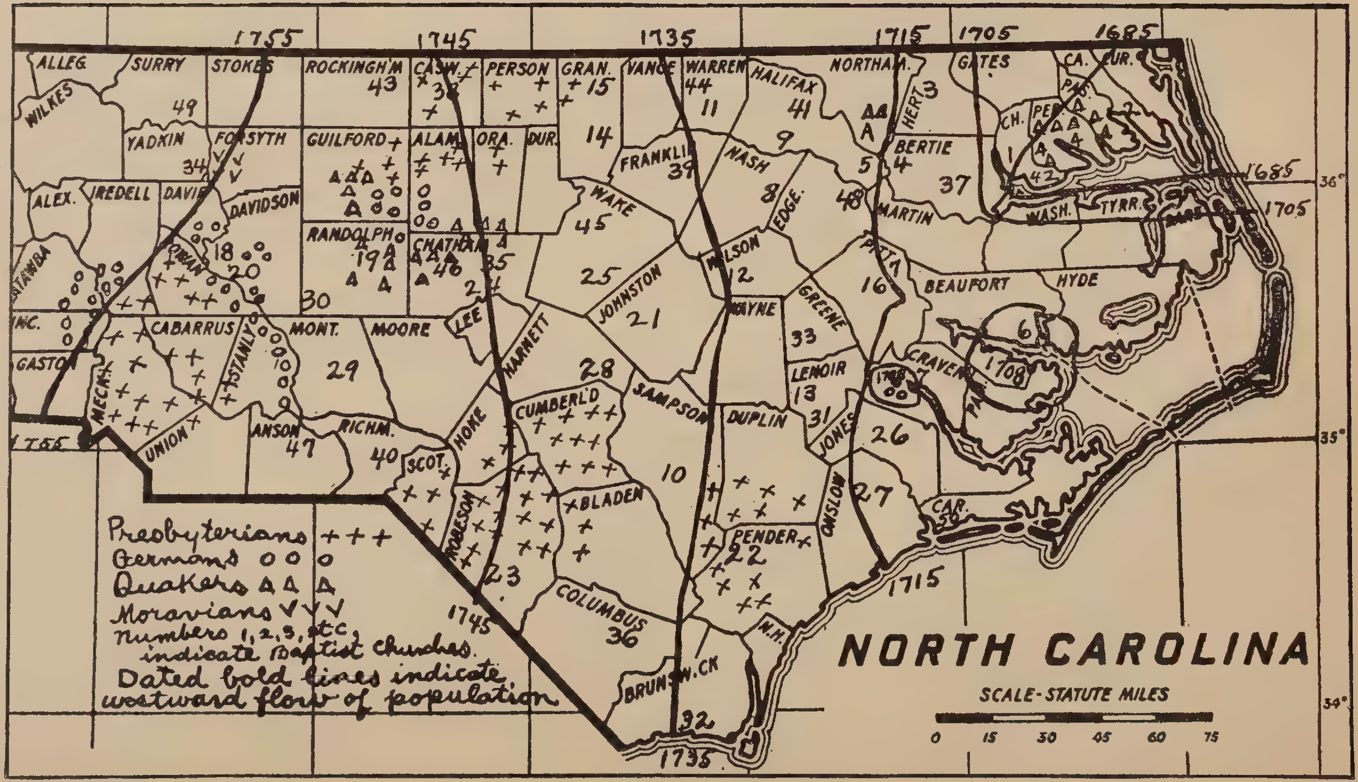
[109] Hassell, *Church History,* 723.


NORTH CAROLINA
SCALE-STATUTE MILES
0 15 30 45 60 75
Presbyterians + + +
Germans O O O
Quakers Δ Δ Δ
Moravians V V V
numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. indicate Baptist churches.
Dated bold lines indicate westward flow of population
1755
1745
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1685
1708
36°
35°
34°
ALLEG.
SURRY
STOKES
ROCKINGH'M
CASW.
PERSON
GRAN.
VANCE
WARREN
HALIFAX
NORTHAM.
HERT.
GATES
CA.
CUR.
PAS.
PER.
CH.
WILKES
YADKIN
FORSYTH
GUILFORD
ALAM.
ORA.
DUR.
FRANKLIN
NASH
EDGE.
BERTIE
MARTIN
WASH.
TYRR.
DARE
ALEX.
IREDELL
DAVIE
DAVIDSON
RANDOLPH
CHATHAM
WAKE
WILSON
PITT
BEAUFORT
HYDE
CATAWBA
ROWAN
LINC.
CABARRUS
STANLY
MONT.
MOORE
LEE
HARNETT
JOHNSTON
WAYNE
GREENE
CRAVEN
PAM.
GASTON
MECK.
UNION
ANSON
RICHM.
SCOT.
HOKE
CUMBERL'D
SAMPSON
DUPLIN
LENOIR
JONES
ONSLOW
CAR.
ROBESON
BLADEN
PENDER
COLUMBUS
N.H.
BRUNSW.CK

# EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES WITH DATES OF FORMATION

1. Chowan, 1727
2. Shiloh, 1729
3. Meherrin, 1730
4. Sandy Run, 1740
5. Kehukee, 1742
6. Pungo, 1742
7. Swift Creek, 1742
8. Falls of Tar, 1744
9. Fishing Creek, 1746
10. Great Cohara, 1749
11. Reedy Creek, 1750
12. Toisnot, 1750
13. Bear Creek, 1752
14. Tar River, 1753
15. Grassy Creek, 1754
16. Red Banks, 1754
17. Flat Swamp, 1754
18. Jersey Settlement, 1754
19. Sandy Creek, 1755
20. Abbott's Creek, 1756
21. Three Creeks, 1756
22. Bull Tail, 1756
23. Bladen County, 1756
24. Deep River, 1757
25. Swift Creek, 1757
26. Trent, 1757
27. New River, 1757
28. Black River, 1758
29. Little River, 1758
30. Uwharrie, 1759
31. Southwest, 1759
32. Lockwood's Folly, 1759
33. Great Contentnea, 1761
34. Shallow Fords, 1762
35. Haw River, 1764
36. White Marsh, 1765
37. Cashie, 1771
38. Country Line, 1772
39. Sandy Creek, 1771
40. Hitchcock's, 1772
41. Rocky Swamp, 1774
42. Yoppim, 1775
43. Wolf's Island, 1775
44. Tanner's, 1775
45. Newlight, 1775
46. Rocky River, 1776
47. Rocky River, 1776
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49. Deep Creek, 1777
50. Newport, 1778

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